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THE WORKS

OF

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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ESSAYS, *(Continued.)*

WINTER EVENINGS.

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ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

No. CXVII.

THE FOLLY OF BRINGING UP CHILDREN TO A LEARNED PROFESSION, WITHOUT THE PROBABILITY OF PROVIDING THEM WITH A COMPETENCY.

THAT admiration is the effect of ignorance, is a truth universally confessed; and nothing so forcibly excites the wonder of the illiterate plebeian, as the character of profound erudition.

Dazzled by the splendour of literary honours, many an honest parent has prevented his son from acquiring a fortune behind the counter, to see him starve in a pulpit.

These reflections were occasioned by meeting an old friend at a coffee-house one evening last week. His looks were meagre, his dress shabby, and he sufficiently apologized for the rustiness of his coat by the following narrative:

"My father," said he, after some preliminary conversation, "was a shoemaker of tolerable business in London; a very honest man, and very much given to reading godly books, whenever he could steal a moment from the lap-stone and the last. As I was the only child, he took great delight in me, and used frequently to say, that he hoped in time to see me arch-

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bishop of Canterbury, and no such great matters neither; for as to my parentage, I was as good as many a one that had worn a mitre; and he would make me as good a *scholard* too, or it should go hard with him.

"My destination to the church was thus unalterably fixed before I was five years old; and in consequence of it, I was put to a grammar-school in the city, whence, after a thousand perils of the cane and perils of the rod, I went to the university on an exhibition of fifteen pounds a year, which my father obtained from one of the city companies, with no small difficulty. So scanty an allowance would by no means defray the enormous expense of university education; and my father, whose pride would not let me appear meaner than my companions, very readily agreed to pay me forty pounds out of the yearly profits of his trade, and to debar himself many innocent gratifications, in order to accomplish in me the grand object of all his ambition.

"In consequence of my father's desire that I should complete the full term of academical education, I did not go into orders till I was of seven years standing, and had taken the degree of Master of Arts. I was therefore incapable of receiving any pecuniary emoluments from my studies, till I was six-and-twenty. Then, however, I was resolved to make a bold push, and to free my father from the burthen of supporting me with half the profits of his labours. The old man was eager that I should attempt to get some kind of preferment; not, as he would generously say, that he wanted to withdraw his assistance, but that he thought it was high time to begin to look up at the bishopric.

"I hastened to London as the most ample field for the display of my abilities, and the acquisition of money and fame. Soon after my arrival, I heard of a vacant lectureship; and though I was an entire stranger to every one of the parishioners, I resolved to trust my

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cause to honest endeavours, and a sedulous canvass. I shall not trouble you with an enumeration of the several indignities I suffered (for I had not lost my university pride), from being under the necessity to address, with the most abject supplication, chandlers, barbers, and green-grocers. Suffice it to acquaint you, that myself, and another young clergyman of regular education, appeared on the day of election to have but seventeen votes between us; and that a methodistical enthusiast, who had once been a carpenter, bore away the prize with a majority of a hundred and twenty.

"Though disappointed, I was not dejected; and I applied to a certain rector for his curacy, the duty of which consisted in prayers twice a day, a sermon on Sundays, and innumerable burials, christenings, and weddings. I thought myself happy, however, in being offered forty guineas a year, without surplice, or surplus fees; but how was I chagrined, on being told by the rector, on the very Sunday I went to officiate, that I need not trouble myself, as another gentleman had undertaken the whole duty at forty pounds!

"I waited a considerable time in expectation that something else would fall; but heard nothing in which there was the least probability of success, unsupported, as I was, by friends, and unknown to fame. At last, I was informed by an acquaintance, that a certain clergyman in the city was about to resign his lectureship, and that he would probably resign in my favour, if I were early enough in my application. I made all the haste I possibly could to reach this gentleman before his resignation; and found very little difficulty in persuading him to intercede in my favour. In short, his endeavours, joined to my own, secured the lectureship, and I was unanimously chosen. The electors, however, expressed a desire that I would quit my place of residence, which was at a distance, and

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live in the parish. To this request I consented; and immediately fixed myself in a decent family, where I lodged and boarded for fifty pounds a year; and as I was not so ambitious as my father, I congratulated myself on the happy event, and sat down contented and satisfied. But, alas! how was I confounded, when my collectors brought the annual contribution, to find it amount to no more than the exact sum of twenty-one pounds two shillings and three-pence three farthings! I was under an immediate necessity of discharging my lodging, resigning my preferment, and quietly decamping with the loss of no inconsiderable sum out of my pittance.

"Thus, Sir," said he, "I have now for these twenty years been tossed about in the world without any fixed residence, and without any certain prospect of my bread. I must not, however, complain, as I am well assured there are many in the metropolis in situations very similar to mine. Yet sometimes, I own, I cannot help being foolish enough to imagine, that I might, perhaps, have been happier, and I am sure I could have been richer, had I been brought up to my paternal awl and last. My poor father died about two years ago, and I have reason to think, his disappointment and sorrow for my ill success hastened his dissolution.

"I now support myself tolerably well in the capacity of, what the world ludicrously calls, a Hackney Parson. And though I do not get quite so much as a journeyman shoemaker, I make shift to keep soul and body together; and I thank God for that. If, Sir, you could recommend me to read prayers occasionally, or bury a corpse, here is my address, up four pair of stairs"——

He was proceeding, but he had too powerfully excited my sympathy; and after consoling him to the best of my power, I took my leave of him, not without

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severe reflections on those parents, who, to indulge a childish vanity, bring up their offspring to misery and want.

No. CXVIII.

ON DECENCY AS THE ONLY MOTIVE OF OUR APPARENT VIRTUES, AND PARTICULARLY OF OUR RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR.

WHATEVER may be the vices of this age, it cannot be said to be particularly distinguished by hypocrisy. Selfishness reigns triumphant; and men, for the most part, pursue whatever they think conducive to their own pleasure or interest, without regarding appearances, or the opinions of others, except, indeed, when their interest or their pleasure are immediately concerned.

Even they who fill offices of confidence and honour in the community, are, in this age, fond of divesting themselves of that external dignity with which the wisdom of our ancestors judged it right to surround them. They descend with a peculiar kind of pride from their natural or political eminence, and will not even display the appearance of those virtues and abilities which are absolutely necessary in their offices and stations. They ostentatiously exhibit a carelessness and profligacy in their conversation and behaviour, which, if they really possess, ought to displace them from their rank, and strip them of their blushing honours.

In those who fill public offices, or who are fixed in the more important professions, a regard to external decency is itself a virtue. But, in truth, if the present disordered state of things would permit, none ought to fill those offices and professions, whose regard to decency does not arise from a regard to virtue.

There are, indeed, many who are esteemed good sort of persons, but whose goodness is unprincipled;

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and appears to arise solely from a regard to external decorum, or what is called the saving of appearances. And this motive, poor and contemptible as it is, in comparison with rational principles arising from conviction, is very often the only avowed motive for the regular performance of all external duties, but more particularly of those which concern religion.

Our religion teaches us to separate one day out of seven for religious purposes. But many men consider the institution merely as a foolish superstition; and therefore spend the Sabbath, like the charming people abroad, at cards and in dissipation, and very much lament those gross prejudices of the common people, which render it decent and prudent not to open the theatres, and enliven the horrid dulness of the Seventh Day by public diversions. Even mighty good sort of people, as they are usually called, hesitate not to confess, that a regard to external decency is one of the chief motives of their regular conduct in observing the Sabbath, and other virtuous practices of our forefathers.

It would not be difficult to trace this motive of decency in many of the apparent virtues, which display themselves, with no little ostentation, in every department of human life. But it is really better to pay that deference to virtue which arises from assuming the appearances, than by impudent and avowed contempt of it, to injure others by the example. To have merely a regard to decency in common life, and in a wicked and unprincipled age, becomes, in some degree, virtuous. We will not, therefore, expose this unsound virtue to severe censure, except when it appears in religion, where, whatever appearances are insincere, constitute hypocrisy of a most detestable kind, hypocrisy founded on self-interest.

Pope has said, that Secker was decent, and that

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Rundle had a heart. Whether the censure or the praise was just is not mine to determine. All I shall remark on the passage is, that though decency may smooth the way to courts, and insinuate itself into the highest seats of preferment, it is a heart only which is capable of deriving, from the success, a pure and solid satisfaction. Though decency without sincerity may be approved by narrow politicians, and even gain the applause of the multitude, by deceiving them; yet let not the hypocrite triumph, but remember, that there is one before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden.

No. CXIX.

ON THE ANIMOSITIES OCCASIONED IN THE COUNTRY BY THE GAME LAWS.

In a late paper on the disagreements of a country neighbourhood, I purposely omitted one of the most fruitful causes of them, intending to consider it in a paper by itself, consistently with its extensive and important operation. I believe it will be allowed by all who have made remarks, that the individuals of this nation are more seriously and inveterately divided by disputes about the Game, than by controversies which make much more noise in the world on the subjects of politics or religion. What remains among us of savageness and brutality is chiefly preserved by the mean and selfish greediness of those who possess a thousand peculiar advantages, and who yet meanly contend for an exclusive right to destroy the Game; that usufructuary property which the Creator intended to be possessed by the first occupant, like the air, light, and water.

Some restraints, however, of that kind, which tend to prevent the poor labourer from wasting his valuable time, might, perhaps, be neither unjust, nor in any

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respect attended with inconvenience. But the Game Laws, as they now exist in England, are a disgrace to the noble fabric of our free constitution. They are illiberal in their nature; they originated in slavery, and they lead to tyranny. It is remarked by Burn, and the great Commentator on our legal system, that, in one statute only for the preservation of Game, there are not less than six blunders in grammar, besides other mistakes; so that one is led to conclude, that this part of our boasted code was drawn up by a committee of boorish country esquires and stupid fox-hunters. Indeed, the whole body of the Game Laws is replete with perplexity, absurdity, and contradiction. What can be more ridiculous, than that the legislature of a mighty empire should require one hundred a year as a qualification to shoot a poor partridge, and only forty shillings to vote for a senator? "There is another offence," says Blackstone, "so constituted by a variety of acts of parliament; which are so numerous and confused, and the crime itself of so questionable a nature, that I shall not detain the reader with many observations thereupon. And yet it is an offence which the sportsmen of England seem to think of the highest importance; and a matter, perhaps the only one, of general and national concern; associations having been formed all over the kingdom to prevent its destructive progress; I mean the offence of destroying such beasts and fowls as are ranked under the denomination of Game." Upon the whole, it may be truly said, that an Englishman, who has a regard for the honour of his country, and sense enough to see the mean and arbitrary spirit of the Game Laws, and the nonsense of the letter, must hide his face in confusion, when he considers how much time and attention have been spent upon them by the British legislature.

Rural diversions certainly constitute a very pleasing

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and proper amusement for all ranks above the lowest. Every man who has a just claim to the title of gentleman, or, indeed, who is capable of spending his time in amusement without injuring the public or his own family, ought to be suffered to partake of them: if he gives up his hours, his labour, and his thoughts to the pursuit, he has earned a right to the object, since the object is of a nature which cannot be appropriated while alive and at liberty. A fellow-creature is agreeably amused and benefited, and no man robbed, since the bird that flies in the air no more belongs to the tenant of the mansion-house, than the sun-beam which equally shines on the cottage and the palace. Poor is the opulence, and little the grandeur, that shows a disposition, which would undoubtedly engross, if it were possible, the light and the air.

With respect to the matter of a trespass, it is certain, that a lord of the manor is no less liable to be prosecuted for it on his own manor than any other person, whether qualified or unqualified. It shows, therefore, the ignorance as well as arbitrary disposition of these petty princes, when they claim the privilege of prowling for prey, without control, on their neighbour's land, and of excluding all others from their own. In short, it is extremely doubtful what privileges the lord of the manor possesses; and whether he has a better right to hunt and shoot, without a particular grant from the king, than the meanest subject whom he bullies and brow-beats. The contemptible laws which have been made on this business certainly want illustration and amendment. Indeed, they ought to be torn out of the statute-book of a free people, and the memory of them, like that of feudal ignorance and slavery, execrated.

There is a practice particularly mean and oppressive, which very much prevails in this selfish age, among

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the engrossers of that part of the creation which God and nature have constituted free as the seas and winds. They do not consider the pursuit of game in the liberal light of a gentlemanlike diversion, but view the hare and the partridge as provender for the table at once genteel and cheap. They therefore seldom give themselves the trouble to join in the chase, or carry the gun over the furrows; but select some idle peasant, who, by poaching, has acquired a skill in the arts of destroying game, and send him to provide pheasants, and bid defiance to his superiors, whenever the master has company to dine with him, and wishes to save an article in the butcher's account. This hero sallies forth under the protection of the lord or lady of the manor; and if he meets a curate, or an apothecary, or a reputable tradesman, or even a neighbouring lord of the manor, boldly insults them, threatens to shoot their dogs or seize their fowling-pieces; and justifies all his insolence by alleging, that what he does or says is all by his master's order. Appeal to that master, and, probably, the insults are aggravated; or, if he pretends to uncommon affability, he will allow that the fellow is apt to be a little foul-mouthed, but, upon the whole, is a very faithful servant. The poor man himself might, indeed, be punished both for his trespass and his ill-usage; but though he insulted his prosecutors in the field, he is ready, like all upstart and petty potentates, to bend on his knees for mercy, and usually disarms the generous by pleading a wife and six children. I know not which ought to predominate, compassion for the deluded peasant, or contempt for his employer. It is surely enough that the rich man claims an exclusive right to the commoners of nature himself; and he ought by no means to be suffered to commission the lowest plebeian to do that which he prohibits in gentlemen of the professions, of

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fortunes as independent, if not so great, as his own, and of minds often much greater.

It is in the power of these hirelings, who seldom possess much principle, to involve all the country in animosity. The landed gentry, especially nabobs and upstarts, usually possess a share of pride fully proportionate to their estate and mansion-house. The hireling of one trespasses on the dominions of another. Reprisals are made. Each defends his representative. One thinks himself as good (for that is the phrase) as the other. No concessions can possibly be made. Hatred, of the bitterest and most rancorous kind, mutually takes possession of these lords in miniature; and many a hunting would end, if vassals could be procured, like that of Chevy Chace, in a bloody battle.

If compassion did not intervene, one might be much entertained with so ludicrous an object, as that of creatures, who pretend to reason, benevolence, Christianity, and education, rendering their existence mutually painful by fierce quarrels, secret but venomous hatred, expensive and vexatious litigations, occasioned by objects of a nature truly trifling in themselves, and which, allowing them every possible praise, can be called no more than innocent diversions. Are we not still children with all our beard and gravity about us, if we play till we quarrel? Our conduct, in this respect, is almost too absurd to admit of serious expostulation. It may furnish scenes for mirth at a puppet-show, or a farce at Bartholomew Fair.

However, I think it necessary, before I conclude this subject, to declare, for the sake of avoiding the malignant misinterpretations of gossips and scandal-dealers by profession, that there are no allusions in this paper either personal or local; and that I have not been pleading for a privilege in which I am interested, not being inclined to hunt, nor able to shoot.

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I will beg leave to add one passage on the subject from Blackstone, for the information of those among sportsmen, who are too tenacious of their exclusive rights, and who are able to read it.

"Another violent alteration of the English constitution, consisted in the depopulation of whole countries for the purposes of the king's royal diversion; and subjecting both them, and all ancient forests of the kingdom, to the unreasonable severity of forest laws, imported from the continent; whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the king's deer, yet he might start any game, pursue and kill it, upon his own estate. But the rigour of these new constitutions vested the sole property of all the Game in England in the king alone; and no man was allowed to disturb any fowl of the air or any beast of the field, of such kinds as were specially reserved for the royal amusement of the sovereign, without express license from the king, by the grant of a chase or free warren: and those franchises were granted as much with a view to preserve the breed of animals, as to indulge the subject. From a similar principle to which, though the forest laws are now mitigated, and by degrees grown entirely obsolete; yet from this root has sprung a bastard slip, known by the name of the Game Law, now arrived to, and wantoning in, its highest vigour, both founded upon the same unreasonable notions of permanent property in wild creatures, and both productive of the same tyranny to the commons: but with this difference; that the forest laws established only one mighty hunter throughout the land, the Game Laws have raised a little Nimrod in every manor. And in one respect the ancient law was much less unreasonable than the modern; for the king's grantee of a chase or

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free warren might kill game in every part of his franchise: but now, though a freeholder of less than one hundred a year is forbidden to kill a partridge on his own estate, yet nobody else (not even the lord of the manor, unless he hath a grant of free warren) can do it, without committing a trespass, and subjecting himself to an action."

No. CXX.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNING THE TEMPER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many complaints of the calamities of human life, it is certain, that more constant uneasiness arises from ill temper than from ill fortune. In vain has Providence bestowed every external blessing, if care has not been taken by ourselves to smooth the asperities of the temper. Bad temper imbitters every sweet, and converts a paradise into a place of torment.

The government of the temper then, on which the happiness of the human race so greatly depends, can never be too frequently or too forcibly recommended. But as it was found by some of the ancients, one of the most efficacious methods of deterring young persons from any disagreeable or vicious conduct, to point out a living character in which it appeared in all its deformity, I shall exhibit a picture, in which I hope a bad temper will appear, as it really is, a most unamiable object.

It is by no means uncommon to observe those who have been flattered for superficial qualities at a very early age, and engaged in so constant a series of dissipating pleasure, as to leave no time for the culture of the mind, becoming, in the middle and advanced periods of life, melancholy instances of the miserable effects resulting from an ungoverned temper. A certain lady, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Hispulla, was celebrated from her infancy for a fine complexion. She had, indeed, no very amiable expression in her eyes, but

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the vermilion of her cheeks did not fail to attract admiration, and she was convinced by her glass, and by the asseverations of the young men, that she was another and a fairer Helen. She had every opportunity of improving her mind; but as we naturally bestow our first care on the quality which we most value, she could never give her attention either to books or oral instruction, and at the age of fifteen or sixteen could scarcely write her name legibly, or read a sentence without hesitation. Her personal charms were, however, powerful enough to captivate the heart of a thoughtless heir, very little older than herself. Her vanity, rather than her love, was gratified by the alliance; and when the assiduities of promiscuous suitors were at an end, she found herself sinking in the dead calm of insipidity. When love was no more, other passions sprung up with all the luxuriancy of rank weeds in a soil where no salutary herb has been planted in the vernal season. Pride, that fruitful plant which bears every kind of odious quality in abundance, took root in her heart, and flourished like the nettle or the hemlock on the banks of the stagnant pool.

Her husband was the first to feel its baneful effects. Though the match was greatly to her advantage, she persuaded herself that she might have done better; and that her good fortune was by no means adequate to the prize which her beauty and merit might have justly claimed. With this conviction, and without any habits or abilities which might lead her to seek amusement in books, she found no diversion so congenial to her heart, as the tormenting a good-natured, young, and agreeable husband, who, by marrying, had excluded her from the probability of a title. As a small compensation for the injury received, she assumed an absolute dominion over him, his fortune, and his fa-

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mily. He dares not differ in opinion from her; for on the slighest opposition, her eyes dart fire, her cheeks glow with indignation, and her tongue utters every bitter word which rage and malice can dictate. The comfort of every meal is poisoned by a quarrel; and an angry vociferation is re-echoed from the parlour to the kitchen, from the cellar to the garret, by night and by day, except in the awful and ominous pause of a sullen silence.

The poor husband, who, with every amiable disposition, possessed also the virtue of patience, bare the evil as long as human nature could bear it; but as years advanced, and her fury increased, he sought a refuge at the tavern, and in the composing juice of the grape. Excess and vexation soon laid him in the only secure asylum from the stings and arrows of an outrageous temper, the silent tomb.

The children, after suffering every species of persecution which an angry, though foolishly fond mother could inflict, no sooner arrived at maturity, than they began to look for happiness in an escape from home, where neither peace nor ease could find a place. The daughters married meanly, unworthily, and wretchedly, contented to take refuge from the rage of a furious mother in the arms of footmen and hair-dressers; the sons ran away, and became vagrant and wretched debauchees; till in mere despair, one of them entered as a soldier in the East India service, and the other put an end to his own existence.

The mother, after shedding a few natural tears, and wiping them soon, began to feel her pride and passion amply gratified in an absolute dominion over an estate, a mansion-house, and a tribe of servants, whose dependent situation made them bear her fury with little resistance. But she enjoyed her reign but a short time; for as her mind was incapable of resting on

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itself for support, she sought relief from the bottle of cordial; and, heated one day with a large draught, and a violent passion with one of the maids, she burst a blood-vessel, and expired in a scolding fit, her tongue still quivering after her heart had ceased its pulsation.

I believe the originals of such a picture as this, are much less common in the present age, than they were in the last century. Ladies were then secluded from the world till marriage, and as they were very superficially educated in every thing but potting and preserving, it is no wonder if they became termagants, shrews, scolds, or viragos. They had no right ideas of themselves or the world around them, and yielded, without opposition, to those violent emotions which arise perhaps in every mind when it is totally uncultivated.

Culture of the understanding is, indeed, one of the best methods of subduing the heart to softness, and redeeming it from that savage state in which it too often comes from the hands of nature. The more our reason is strengthened, the better she is enabled to keep her seat on the throne, and to govern those passions which were appointed to be her subjects; but which too often rebel, and succeed in their unnatural revolt. But besides the effect of mental culture, in calling forth and increasing the powers of the reasoning faculty, it seems to possess an influence in humanizing the feelings, and meliorating the native disposition. Music, painting, and poetry, teach the mind to select the agreeable parts of those objects which surround us, and by habituating it to a pure and permanent delight, gradually superinduce an habitual good-humour. It is of infinite importance to happiness, that the mind should be accustomed from infancy to turn from deformed and painful scenes, and to contemplate whatever can be found of moral and natural

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beauty. The spirits, under this benign management, contract a milkiness, and learn to flow all-cheerily in their smooth and yielding channels; while, on the contrary, if the young mind is teased, fretted, and neglected, the passages of the spirits become rugged, abrupt, exasperated, and the whole nervous system seems to acquire an excessive irritability. The ill-treatment of children has not only made them wretched at the time, but wretched for life; tearing the fine contexture of their nerves, and roughening, by example, and by some secret and internal influence, the very constitution of their tempers.

So much of the happiness of private life, and the virtues of mothers and daughters in particular, depends on the government of the temper, that the temper ought to be a principal object of regard in a well-conducted education. The suffering of children to tyrannize, without control, over servants and inferiors, is, I am convinced, the ruin of many an amiable disposition. The virtues of humanity, benevolence, humility, cannot be too early enforced. Every method should be used which reason, religion, prudence, and experience, can suggest, to accomplish the purpose of sweetening the temper, and banishing the furies from society. May the endeavours be successful; and may we only read, that there have indeed been such animals as shrews and viragos, but that the breed is extinct in England, like the breed of wolves!

I have been much pleased with the lovely picture of Serena, in Mr. Hayley's instructive poem, the Triumphs of Temper; and I cannot conclude, without earnestly entreating the ladies to view it as a looking-glass, by which they may learn to dress their minds in a manner which can never be out of fashion; but which will enable them to secure as well as extend their conquests, and to charm even when the lilies and roses are all

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withered. If the poem should effect this very laudable purpose, the Virtues, the Muses, and the Graces, should unite to form a wreath for the poet's brow, and hail him as the restorer of a golden age. While every mother, wife, and daughter aspires at the virtues of a Serena, let Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone be confined in chains to the infernal regions, and forbidden ever more to arise and assume the shape of a British lady!

No. CXXI.

ON THE MORAL EFFECTS OF A GOOD TRAGEDY.

It is with regret I observe, that a taste for the noblest part of theatrical amusements, the representation of tragedy, is rather on the decline. It strongly marks the frivolity of an age, when the buskin is excluded for the sock, and the public attention too much engaged by dancers, singers, and harlequins, to admit the serious, yet lively and affecting pleasures of the tragic muse.

There seems to me, to be no method more effectual of softening the ferocity, and improving the minds of the lower classes of a great capital, than the frequent exhibition of tragical pieces, in which the distress is carried to the highest extreme, and the moral at once self-evident, impressive, and instructive. The multitudes of those who cannot read, or, if they could, have neither time nor abilities for deriving much advantage from reading, are powerfully impressed, through the medium of the eyes and ears, with those important truths, which, while they illuminate the understanding, correct and mollify the heart. Benevolence, justice, heroism, and the wisdom of moderating the passions, are plainly pointed out, and forcibly recommended to those savage sons of uncultivated nature, who have few opportunities, and would have no inclination for instruction, if it did not present itself under the form of

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a delightful amusement. The human heart in general, whether it beats in the bosom of him who has been improved by education, or of the neglected child of poverty, is taught to exercise some of its most amiable propensities by the indulgence of commiseration in scenes of fancied woe. Were the theatre under certain regulations, a man might go to it as he goes to church, to learn his duty; and it might justly be honoured with the appellation which it has often assumed, and be called the School of Virtue.

There are certainly a thousand tragedies of more classical merit, but few better calculated to save the numerous and important classes of the plebeian order from wallowing in vice, theft, intemperance, and wretchedness of every kind, than the tragedy of George Barnwell. Common and illiterate minds cannot follow the high flights of sublime poetry, nor understand the beauties of blank verse; but the language of Lillo, in this humble tale, is level to the lowest degree of intellect. It must, indeed, give pleasure to every friend of unassuming merit, to find the due tribute of applause paid to the modest Lillo by Harris, who, though not destitute of pedantic affectation, was certainly a good critic after the Grecian model. He has not hesitated to place the Fatal Curiosity in the very first rank of dramatic compositions. And George Barnwell, however it may be affectedly despised by the silly votaries of fashion, who abominate it as low, deserves no less to be esteemed for its moral excellence, than the other for its classical. It has, perhaps, saved as many from an ignominious end as the Beggar's Opera has hastened to it. That any moralist, or man of observation, can entertain a doubt concerning the effect on the upper gallery, of a play in which thieves and harlots are represented as amiable and innocent characters, and all the rest of society as rogues, evinces, in this instance;

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an ignorance of human nature. The representation of the Beggar's Opera, is not only an outrage on civilised society, but an extreme act of cruelty to those wretched boys and girls, who have been allured to the paths of destruction, by viewing them thus strewed with artificial flowers. Take away the disgrace, the shame, and the first fine sensibilities of timid vice, and you remove a restraint, the force of whose operation neither precepts nor laws can ever supply. Suppose a country lad, with all his native modesty about him, but possessing great natural sharpness, allured to the theatre by the Beggar's Opera. In a few hours he undergoes a perfect metaphorphosis. He thinks himself illuminated, and despises the honest old folks at home, who have hitherto confined him, as he supposes, in childish ignorance. His perverted ambition takes an unfortunate turn; and if he arrives not at the honour of dying like a Macheath, he will at least endeavour to deserve it. Such, I am well assured, is often a true case; but even the miserable creatures, who are far gone in the paths which lead through villany to ruin, may be called back by the melancholy tale of poor George Barnwell. There are many other tragedies in the English language which convey admirable morals to the lower classes as well as the higher, and have undoubtedly rescued many a wretch, who was deaf to a parent's voice, and a preacher's admonition, from the dominion of their evil passions and habits.

But, indeed, there is no class of the people, however refined and polished, which may not receive such benefits from a well-written tragedy, as scarcely any other mode of instruction can afford. He who has entered into all the feelings of a Shakespeare, an Otway, or a Rowe, may be said to have assimilated with their souls, and snatched a sacred spark, which cannot fail to kindle something in himself resembling the ethereal

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fire of true genius. His nature will be improved, and a species of wisdom and elevation of spirit, which was in vain sought for in academic groves, may at last be imbibed in the theatres. Philosophy may catch a warmth of the drama, which is capable of advancing it to nobler heights than she would otherwise have attained. Socrates, whose benevolence and wisdom appeared to have something of divinity, became the voluntary assistant of Euripides in the composition of his tragedies; and undoubtedly was of opinion, that he taught philosophy to instruct the herd of mankind in the most effectual manner, when he introduced her to their notice in the buskin.

Instructive, entertaining, annimating, and ennobling, as is the spirit of the tragic muse, is it not wonderful that many can slight its efficacy, or view its fine productions on the stage with perfect insensibility? Yet, he who surveys the seats in the theatre, will find many who appear to view a Lear, a Shore, a Hamlet, and a harlequin, with the same heavy eye; nor show one emotion, except it be of laughter, while nature is most powerfully drawing streams from the sacred fountain of tears, wherever it has not been closed by affectation, by a natural or an acquired stupidity. It seems, indeed, to be a part of the contemptible vanity, which characterizes the age, to laugh at public spectacles when others are serious, and to be serious when others laugh. "Who, indeed," says the affected votary of fashion, "would be sincerely affected by any thing said or done by the low creatures on the stage, or enjoyed by the vulgar people in the pit and gallery?"

Some spectators, on the other hand, lose all the effect of the piece by attending to the identical men and women who act, rather than to the characters which they represent. They also admire a favourite performer's coat, gown, cap, shoe, leg, or hand, but

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forget the hero and the heroine, the poet and the poem.

The taste for ridicule, which greatly prevails in a mean, selfish, debauched, and trifling age, contributes to prevent the genuine effect of tragedy. Great laughers are seldom susceptible of deep or serious impressions. While the dead lie scattered on the stage, and every thing is presented to the view which ought to excite pity and terror, the joker dissipates the sweet sorrow of sympathy by the introduction of a ludicrous idea. Ridicule, indeed, seems to become a weapon in the hands of the wicked, destructive of taste and feeling, as well as of morality and religion.

The addition of a ludicrous epilogue, a farce, a pantomine entertainment, and of dances between the acts, has often been lamented as destructive of the moral effects of the finest tragedy. It is true, that they who live to please, must please in order to live; and therefore the players and their managers are not culpable. They must not only provide manly amusements for men, but childish diversions for silly triflers, for children, and for school-boys. These entertainments have, indeed, often that ingenuity and drollery in them, which may, at a proper season, relax the most rigid philosophy. I censure not the things themselves, but the time of their introduction. After the soul has been deeply impressed with serious and virtuous sentiments, it is surely lamentable that every stamp should be effaced by harlequins and buffoons. It must be remembered, that I am speaking of the moral effects of the drama; and I believe every one will agree, that these would be more successfully produced if the entertainment, as it is called by way of eminence, preceded the tragedy. The spectator would then retire to his pillow with his fancy full of fine poetic images, and his heart glowing with every elevated idea of moral

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rectitude. But now his feelings are so trifled with and tantalized, that at last he grows callous to the tenderest pathos, and frequents the theatre merely as a critic in acting, instead of an interested partaker in the scenes which pass in review, and which were calculated to impress a love of every virtue and an abhorrence of all kinds of vice.

Every mode of improving the hearts of the community at large in the serious and severer virtues ought to be applied with diligence. The theatre opens a fine school for the accomplishment of this end; and it would certainly contribute greatly to accelerate the general improvement, if there were less singing, dancing, and buffoonery, and more tragedy. But some fashionable man must set the example of admiring it, or else all the muses themselves might rack their inventions in composing the melancholy tale, with no other effect than that of diffusing sleep or smiles among the higher orders.

It is remarkable, that soon after this paper was published, tragedy became fashionable. The fashion, however, was but transient; it wanted the support of court favour; and poor Tragedy was laughed off from the stage by Farce.

No. CXXII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS, AS A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION, ON THE STATE OF LITERATURE.

It is a mark of the social and public spirit of this nation, that there is scarcely a member of it who does not bestow a very considerable portion of his time and thoughts in studying its political welfare, its interest, and its honour. Though this general taste for politics, from the highest to the lowest orders of the people, has afforded subjects for comic ridicule; yet I cannot help considering it both as a proof of uncommon

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liberality, and as one of the firmest supports of civil liberty. It kindles and keeps alive an ardent love of freedom. It has hitherto preserved that glorious gift of God from the rude hand of tyranny, and tends, perhaps more than any other cause, to communicate the noble fire of true patriotism to the bosoms of posterity. While we watch vigilantly over every political measure, and communicate an alarm through the empire with a speed almost equal to the shock of electricity, there will be no danger that a king should establish despotism, even though he were to invade the rights of his people at the head of a standing army. There would be many a Leonidas to stand at the gates of Thermopylæ.

But as zeal without knowledge is subversive of the purpose which it means to promote; it becomes a true friend to his country, to endeavour to unite with the love of liberty the love of knowledge. It unfortunately happens, that political subjects are of so warm and animating a nature, that they not only appear to interest in a very high degree, but to engross the attention. The newspapers, corrupt as they now are, with only one or two exceptions, form the whole library of the politician; the coffee-house is his school: and he prefers an acrimonious pamphlet, for or against the ministry, to all that was ever written by a Homer, or discovered by a Newton.

To be a competent judge either of political measures or events, it is necessary to possess an enlightened understanding, and the liberal spirit of philosophy; it is necessary to have read history, and to have formed right ideas of the nature of man and of civil society. But I know not how it happens, the most ignorant and passionate are apt to be the most decisive in delivering their sentiments on the very complicated subjects of political controversy. A man whose edu-

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cation never extended beyond writing and the four rules, will determine at once, and with the most authoritative air, such questions as would perplex the wisest statesman adorned with all human learning, and assisted by the experience and advice of the most cultivated persons in the nation. Even gentlemen, according to the common acceptation of that title, or those who have fortunes and have received the common instruction of the times, are seldom able to judge with propriety in politics, though they are usually inclined to dictate with passion. Is it possible that, from having learnt only the first elements of Latin and French, and the arts of dancing, fencing, and fiddling, a man should be qualified, I do not say to sit as a senator, but to expatiate, with sufficient judgment and intelligence, on the propriety and nature of important measures concerted by profound wisdom?

But even among persons whose minds are sufficiently improved to distinguish and pursue the good of man and of society, independently either of passion or of private advantage, the rage for politics often proceeds too far, and absorbs all other objects. In vain does the hand of art present the picture or repeat the melody of music; for the eye is blind, the ear is deaf, to all but the news and the newspaper. Poetry, philology, elegant and polite letters, in all their ramifications, display their alluring charms in vain to him whose head and heart still vibrate with the harsh and discordant sounds of a political dispute. Those books whose tendency is only to promote elegant pleasures or advance science, which flatter no party, and gratify no malignant passion, are suffered to fall into oblivion; while a pamphlet which espouses the cause of any political men or measures, however inconsiderable its literary merit, is extolled as one of the first productions of modern literature. But meagre is the food

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furnished to the mind of man by the declamation of a party bigot. From a taste for trash, and a disrelish of the wholesome food of the mind, and from the consequent neglect of solid learning, mere politicians are prevented from receiving valuable improvement; and the community, together with literature, is at last deeply injured. For when learning is little respected, it will naturally decline; and that the mental darkness consequent on its decline leads to the establishment of despotism, every one who has surveyed the pictures of mankind, as portrayed by the pencil of history, will immediately acknowledge. What did Athens and Rome retain of their ancient dignity when their learning and their arts were no more? That the light of learning should ever again be extinguished, may appear a visionary idea to an Englishman; but so it did to a Roman in the days of Cicero. Notwithstanding the multiplication of books by the art of printing, both they and all value for them may vanish together with the power of understanding them, if the fury of politics should occasion a contempt for letters and for education, and convert the leaders of a people, or the people themselves, into Goths and Vandals.

He who would add an elegance to politics, and distinguish his conversation on the subject from the vociferation of porters in an alehouse, should inspect the finished pieces of antiquity, and learn to view public acts and counsels in the light in which they appeared to philosophers, to those whom the world has long considered the best teachers of political wisdom. Let him study such authors as Thucydides and Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch, Livy and Sallust. Politics will assume new grace by communicating with history and philosophy; and political conversation, instead of a vague, passionate, and declamatory effusion of undigested ideas, will become a most liberal exercise of the

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faculties, and form a mental banquet, at which the best and wisest of mankind might indulge their finer appetites with insatiable avidity. What can constitute a more rational object of contemplation than the noble fabric of society, civilised by arts, letters, and religion? What can better employ our sagacity, than to devise modes, with the liberality of a philosophical patriotism, for its improvement and preservation?

Not only the understanding, the taste, the temper of a people, but the spirit also, will be greatly improved by learning politics of the Greeks and Romans. No man of feeling ever yet read Livy without learning to detest meanness and slavery, and to glow with a love of liberty and an emulation of public virtue. The Greek and Roman spirit cannot be too much encouraged by those who have a just idea of the dignity of a true Englishman, and desire to maintain it. And let it be remembered, that the Athenians, in their most glorious periods, were as much attached to politics and news as Britons ever were; but that they preserved, amidst the warmest contest, a refined taste and delicate passion for the politest learning and the profoundest philosophy.

No. CXXIII.

ON BUFFOONERY IN CONVERSATION.

It is sweet, says the agreeable poet of Venusium, sometimes to lay aside our wisdom, and to indulge, on proper occasions, a species of temporary folly. He, indeed, must be outrageously severe who would prohibit any pleasing mode of passing our leisure hours, while it is consistent with innocence, and the nature of a being eminently distinguished by the fine faculties of reason, fancy, memory, and reflection. Charming is the social hour when solidity of judgment is enlivened by brilliancy of wit, and the lively sallies of

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imagination by a sweet interchange of pensive gravity. Ease, freedom, and the unstudied effusion of the sentiments which naturally arise in cultivated minds, form a very delightful recreation, and dismiss the mind to its serious employments with new alacrity. Those among the ancients who were most celebrated for their wisdom, were remarkable for a cheerful and equable gaiety, and often diverted themselves, in their intervals of severer meditation, with jests and drollery. Who more cheerful than the gentle Socrates? Who more delighted with a joke than the dignified Cicero? But, at the same time, they were equally capable of maintaining a regular conversation in all its gravity and elegance. The dialogues of Socrates, preserved by his eloquent disciples, breathe a wisdom approaching to divine; and Cicero's book *de Oratore*, is one of the noblest monuments of polished urbanity, as are many of his philosophical pieces of speculative wisdom.

But there sometimes prevails a taste for low and noisy mirth, which totally precludes all delicacy of sentiment, all exercise of reason and invention, and almost degrades us to the level of those ludicrous animals whom nature has rendered so wonderfully expert in the art of mimicry. Many persons, who imagine themselves remarkably endowed with humour, and the power of delighting whatever company they deign to bless with their presence, are apt to give their tongues a licence to wander without the reins of judgment; to affect uncommon expressions, attitudes, grimaces, and modes of address and behaviour; and to imagine that oddity is humour, excentricity and downright nonsense prodigiously droll, and rudeness infinitely entertaining. If the company are as foolish as the pretended wit, or, indeed, if they are very polite and good-natured, they seldom refuse the easy tribute of a laugh, either real or affected; and the joker, animated by his fancied en-

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couragement, proceeds in his extravagant sallies, till his assumed folly approaches very nearly to real idiotism. In the mean time, as he draws the attention of the company on himself, and engrosses all the time and talk, he not only lowers himself, but prevents others from rising; relaxes the tone of his own mind, and of all around, to a state of imbecility, and at once prevents the opportunity and the power of uttering a single idea worth remembrance. Noise and laughter are but meagre food for the mind; and however pleased people may appear, they commonly retire from the company in which these have formed the only entertainment with an unsatisfied and uneasy vacuity, and sometimes with disgust and disagreeable reflection.

It very often happens, that these facetious gentlemen who affect buffoonery, rely upon more expeditious methods of becoming prodigiously entertainig, than any thing which requires utterance. They enter a room, and sit down gravely, with their wigs on one side, or with the back part of it over their forehead. They take great delight in the practical joke; and if they can pick your pocket of your handkerchief, smut your face, draw your chair from under you, or make you a fool, as they call it, they consider themselves as other Yorick's, and as fellows of infinite humour, endowed with peculiar talents for setting the table on a roar. It might, indeed, be said with truth, that they literally make fools of themselves, and appear ambitious of supplying that order which was once very common, but is now either a little out of fashion or introduced in disguise; I mean the order of professed and hireling fools, purposely maintained for the amusement of the rich and noble. It has, indeed, been jocularly said, that many in the present age execute the office in their own persons to save expense.

Now, though there is certainly nothing criminal in

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buffoonery, yet, as it tends, when too long continued, to exclude all attention to any thing serious, and to divest conversation of its power of affording improvement as well as pleasure, it is certainly to be wished that it were, in some measure, restrained. I say restrained only; for I do not know any just reason why any method of innocently amusing the mind, during a short interval of inaction, should be utterly forbidden. Man is an animal that delights in variety; and mirth and mimicry, jest and jollity, quips and cranks, and wanton wiles, and laughter holding both his sides are certainly no less allowable as the means of relaxation, than cards or backgammon. He is wise who requires moderation in all indulgencies; but he who inveighs against any innocent ones in the gross, and without exception, has taken a false estimate of human nature, and is not to be considered as a moralist, but as a declaimer. If any one rule will admit of universal application, it is that which directs us to observe the golden mean.

I could never admire the wisdom of certain self-elected legislators of graceful behaviour, who seem to forbid us to laugh, with much greater strictness than they would have prohibited the violation of the decalogue. To be remarkable for laughing on trifling occasions or without occasion, is not only ungraceful, but a sign of folly. But God has distinguished man by the power of risibility, and there is no reason why he should not exercise it; and, perhaps, there would be no time more proper, than when a disciplined fop shows, by his behaviour, that he prefers the varnish of external grace to honour and to honesty.

Wit it has been said, does not naturally excite laughter. But this observation, though true in part, is not universally true; for wit, united with humour, possesses such a command of the risible muscles, that he must be a stoic, or a very ill-natured man, who is able to re-

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sist the impulse. I should, indeed, have no favourable opinion of that man's heart or disposition, who could be present at a truly comic scene, without laying aside his severity, and shaking his sides with as much glee as the ingenuous child of nature. And if it is a weakness not to be able to refrain from laughter at a ludicrous object, it is a weakness of all others the most pardonable; and it is surely better to be even weak than malignant or sulky. But, in truth, the weakness consists only in laughing immoderately, or frequently without an adequate object.

In every convivial meeting of elegant and polished company, the Muses and the Graces should be of the party. The first honours and attention should be paid to them; but let not Comus and Jocus be forbidden to follow in their train, and under their command. The entertainment will be thus heightened and various, and good sense and decorum derive new lustre from good humour. We might, indeed, wish to restrain the excessive and rude mirth which originates in levity and folly, and becomes what is called buffoonery; but far be it from us to banish that sprightliness which naturally results from the gaiety of innocence. Joy, while we are blessed with health and ease, and what the stoics call Euroia, or the well flowing of the stream of life, is gratitude and obedience.

No. CXXIV.

ON THE STYLE OF XENOPHON AND PLATO.

Writers who have displayed any of that uniform peculiarity in their style which renders it easily imitable, however popular they may become at their first appearance, by gratifying the passion for novelty, are by no means the most perfect writers; but are to be classed with those artists of the pencil, whom the painters distinguish by the appellation of Mannerists.

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Simplicity of diction, as it is one of the most engaging beauties, is also one of the most difficult to imitate. It exhibits no prominency of feature, but displays one whole, properly embellished with a thousand little graces, no one of which obtrudes itself in such a manner as to destroy the appearance of a perfect symmetry. In this species of excellence, Xenophon is confessedly a model. He has been called the Attic Muse and the Attic Bee. It has been said, that the Muses would express themselves in his language, that his style is sweeter than honey, that the Graces themselves appear to have assisted in its formation; but though all this praise is justly due, yet it would be difficult to point out any one beauty which recurs so often in the same form as to characterize his composition.

But the numerous writers who have imitated the Rambler or the Adventurer, are discovered in their affectation before the reader has perused a single page. The very peculiar manner of those excellent performances has been easily imitated by inferior writers, and more easily caricatured. Addison is simple and natural, and, consequently, has not often been mimicked with equal success. Indeed, the nearer we approach to the manner of Addison, the more agreeable is our style; but, I believe, none ever admired the style of the Rambler but in the hands of its original author. The satirical writer of Lexiphanes easily rendered it ridiculous; and though, in some of Aiken's prosaic pieces, there is a very serious and good imitation of it, yet we are rather disposed to smile than admire. Affectation always borders on burlesque; but a manner, which derives its graces from nature, cannot be rendered ridiculous. The style of Xenophon, like the philosopher whom he records, is proof against the sportive and malignant buffoonery of an Aristophanes.

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It is, however, certain, that every beauty cannot be combined under one form. If the style of Xenophon displays grace, ease, and sweetness, it is deficient in magnificence, in weight, in authority, and in dignity. But it should be remembered, that the Venus de Medicis is not to be censured because it wants the nerves and muscles of the Farnesian Hercules. It appears to me, however, that though some of the most popular writers of England yield to Xenophon in the softer graces, they greatly excel him in masculine beauty. The authors of the Rambler, of the Adventurer, and some of their imitators, will be found to possess a superiority in this respect, on a fair comparison. Indeed, if there were more singularities and deviations from simplicity than are to be found in those volumes, their excellent sense and fine morality ought to exalt their authors to a degree of honour far superior to any which can be derived from a skill in composition.

According to the opinions of the best judges, ancient and modern, the greatest master of the beauties of style whom the world ever saw, was the divine Plato. The ancients hesitated not to assert, in the zeal of their admiration, that if Jupiter were to speak in the language of Greece, he would infallibly express himself in the diction of Plato. He possessed the art of combining austerity with grace, and sweetness with grandeur; and to him we owe a similar combination in the great orator and philosopher of Rome, who formed his style on the model of Plato, and has given us a resemblance scarcely less exact than that of the bust to its mould, or the waxen seal to the sculptured gem.

The introductions to the dialogues of Cicero are always peculiarly beautiful; so also are those of Plato. It is agreeable to call to mind the sweet spot which

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Plato represents at the place where his dialogues passed, in language no less delightful than the scene.

The river Ilissus glided over the pebbles in a clear stream, so shallow that you might have walked through it without any great inconvenience. At a small distance rose a tall plane-tree, spreading its broad foliage to a considerable distance, and flourishing in all the mature luxuriance of summer beauty. At the root of the tree issued a spring, dedicated to Achelous and the Nymphs, and remarkable for its cool and limpid water. The softest herbage grew round its little banks, the verdure of which was rendered perpetual by the refreshing moisture of the spring, as it flowed down a gentle declivity. A sweet and cooling breeze generally breathed along the shade, and great numbers of *cicadæ*, taking shelter from the sun, resorted to the coverts, and made, with their little chirpings, an agreeable kind of natural music. Plato adds several other agreeable heightenings of the scene, where moral and philosophical beauty was taught to emulate the surrounding beauties of nature. The language of Plato adds charms to the whole, as variegated colours illuminate and embellish the plain sketches of the penciled outline.

It is no wonder that philosophy, recommended by such graces as these, was found to render her votaries enamoured. Virtue and public spirit can scarcely ever want their admirers and followers, when they are decorated in a manner which sets off their own loveliness to the greatest advantage. It is to be lamented, for the sake of virtue, that lord Shaftsbury was a sceptic. His style was a fine imitation of Plato, and displays such beauties as might conceal the ugliness of a deformed system. Mr. Harris has also exhibited some of the Platonic graces; and I cannot help considering it as a mark of defective taste that he is not more po-

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pular. His style, where it successfully imitates Plato, appears to be one of the most elegant, classical, and judiciously ornamented among all the English writers of the present century. They who have raised their taste so as to perceive its beauties, will consider the style of many writers whom they once admired, as comparatively barbarous. He who never tasted the pine-apple, the peach, and the nectarine, may probably suppose that he enjoys the most exquisite flavour of the fruit-garden while he is feasting on a pippin; as he, who never partook of the pippin, may devour a crab, and admire it as a delicacy.

A critic of antiquity, Dionysius the Halicarnassian, has discovered many and great faults in the style of Plato. He seems to think the epithets too poetical, the metaphors too bold, the matter too allegorical. Pompey the Great disputed the point with him; and there is a curious letter extant on the subject, from the critic to the statesman. It is, indeed, obvious to remark, that though Plato would not admit Homer into his republic, he has admitted many of his beauties into his style; and has often written with an enthusiastic warmth, which they who have not partaken of the *afflatus* to which he somewhere pretended, cannot en-entirely approve. A cold critic, like Dionysius, would naturally be disgusted with it; but we cannot listen to his censures of a noble genius, who snatched graces beyond the reach of art, whom Pompey approved, and whom Tully almost idolized. When specimens of perfect composition were to be pointed out, the choice has fallen on the Georgics of Virgil, and the Menexenus of Plato.

Both Xenophon and Plato display what is more valuable than all verbal elegance, a fine system of morality, which long diffused over the world a light unequalled, till the sun of revelation arose. If Xeno-

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phon's memoirs were divested of a few superfluities and a few absurdities, I should not fear to assert, that they approach very nearly to the Gospel, in the exhibition of instructive lessons, and a sublime, yet encouraging example, of all human excellence; for, with respect to the calumnies advanced against Socrates, they undoubtedly originated from the father of lies. And those writers are to be esteemed the enemies to human virtue and happiness, who employ their ingenuity in detracting from illustrious and established reputation, like his who taught the lessons of reason and virtue, and practised what he taught, and sealed it by death.

No. CXXV.

ON THE ADVANTAGES DERIVABLE FROM NATIONAL ADVERSITY.

It is very certain that national prosperity, as it is comprehended in the idea of numerous fleets and armies, of extensive empire, large revenues, advantageous commerce, and a profusion of money in specie, is a kind of good by no means necessarily connected with moral good, or with the substantial happiness of individuals. It makes a splendid figure in imagination's eye; but to reason, it appears in a very questionable shape, and experience is able to evince, that it has always diffused profligacy and misery through the walks of private life; and, by introducing luxury, licentiousness, indolence, and corruption, has at once injured all that can render human nature dignified and happy, and precipitated the decline and the downfal of empires while triumphing in fancied glory.

It has been observed, that the bodies politic and natural bear to each other a remarkable analogy. A human form pampered, bloated, and plethoric, will often have the appearance of strength, as well as mag-

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nitude; though no state of it can be less adapted to facilitate the animal movements, or in greater danger of a hasty dissolution. The body politic also loses in muscular force, as much as it acquires of unwieldly size, till, by the gradual decrease of vigour and augmentation of weight, it totters on its baseless supports, and, at last, lies level in the dust with Babylon and ancient Rome. Luxury, the inevitable consequence of what is falsely called national prosperity, becomes the grave of empires, and of all that could adorn them, or render their long duration an object of rational desire.

There is, undoubtedly, a certain degree of magnitude, at which when a state is arrived, it must of necessity undergo the alternative, of being purged of its peccant humours, or falling into a nerveless langour and consequent decline. Perhaps our own country has already arrived at that degree, and is now, under the operation of Divine Providence, suffering the amputation of its morbid excrescences for the salvation of its health and existence. It may lose some of its revenues; but it may save and meliorate its morals and its liberty. Ministers may be shaken from their seats, pensioners and place-men may be reduced to despair, funds may be annihilated, and estates brought down to their natural value; but freedom, but virtue, but industry, but the British constitution, but human nature shall survive the wreck, and emerge like silver and gold when tried by the fire, with new value and unsullied lustre. After a state of political adversity, something may take place in society similar to the expected renovation of all things consequent to a general conflagration of the universe.*

Distress and difficulty are known to operate in private life as the spurs of diligence. Powers, which

* Written towards the conclusion of the American war.

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would for ever have lain dormant in the halcyon days of ease and plenty, have been called forth by adversity, and advanced their possessor to the most enviable heights of virtue, happiness, and glory. Man is naturally indolent, and, when undisturbed, will bask and sleep in the sunshine till the sleep of death; but, when roused by the blast and the thunder, he rises, strains every sinew, and marches on to enterprise and success. Success will almost infallibly attend great exertions uniformly and resolutely continued; so that what began in misery ends in triumph, as the sun which rose in a mist descends with serenity, and paints the whole horizon with gold and purple.

Public industry may be excited in the same manner, and in the same degree, by public misfortunes. The nation is impoverished, or, in other words, its superfluities are retrenched. It is an event devoutly to be wished. Luxury, with ten thousand evils in her train, is obliged to withdraw, and the humble virtues, whom she had driven by her insolence into exile, cheerfully advance from their concealment. Industry and frugality take the lead; but to what a degree of vigour must every muscle of the body politic be braced, when every member is, in some measure, actuated by industry and frugality. No man ever yet exerted himself during life to the utmost of his strength; nor is it on record, that any state was ever yet so exhausted, but that, while it enjoyed liberty, it might draw new resources from its own vitals. Though the tree is lopped, yet so long as the root remains unhurt, it will throw out a greater luxuriancy of branches, produce fruit of better flavour, and derive fresh vigour from the axe. If one has accidently disturbed an ant-hill, or broken the fabric of the hive, though the little animals appeared before to have exerted their utmost efforts, yet it is amazing with what additional diligence they apply themselves to

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repair the depredation. Not a moment is allowed for despondency. The earth and the air glow with motion, and the misfortune seems immediately to add to their spirits, and ultimately both to their store and security.

The beautiful description which Virgil has given us of the busy scene in which the Tyrians are engaged in building Carthage, represents, in a most lively manner, the alacrity with which human creatures are found to exert themselves when instigated by the stimulus of necessity. An emulation of labour seizes every bosom. No murmuring, no complainings in the street, but every one feels himself happy in proportion as he renders himself useful. Men's abilities rise with the occasion; and political evil, like other evil, under the conduct of a merciful Deity, has produced extensive good, by calling forth some of the noblest exertions and most perfect characters which have adorned the records of human nature.

There is one beneficial effect of national adversity, of greater importance than any which I have enumerated. It subdues the haughty soul, elevated with riches, and inebriated with excess, and turns the attention to the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who from his throne beholds all nations, and bids the sceptre to depart from the wicked to the righteous. It teaches us to rely less upon our foreign auxiliaries, our musquets, our mortars, our cannon, our copper-bottomed men-of-war, our generals, and our admirals, than on the Lord of hosts.

When he fights for us we shall conquer. Without him, we shall in vain put our trust in princes; but "the ball of empire may continue to roll on westward as it has ever yet done, till it stops in America, a world unknown to the ancients, and which may save the tears of some future Alexander."

If Providence shall ever decree the downfal of British

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supremacy, happy should I be to have suggested one idea which may stimulate the exertions of my countrymen, once more to raise the noble column on the basis of liberty and virtue; or which may console them on its ruins, and teach them, while they sit by the waters of affliction, and hang their harps on the willow, to think of Him who can cause rivers of comfort to flow in the dreary desart.

No. CXXVI.

ON SOME OF THE FALSE PRETENSIONS AND IMPOSITIONS OF THE ARTFUL AND AVARICIOUS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pretensions of religion, philosophy, and education, the greater part of mankind appears to be restrained in their actual conduct by few efficient principles but those which are dictated by a regard to sordid or ambitious interest. To the love of gain, and the weakness or want of principles, it must be imputed, that every occupation and department of life abounds with imposture. A masque is easily put on. Appearances are, indeed, far more easily assumed than realities; and they are often more successful and more plausible; for the edifice of one who employs all his time and attention in gilding, painting, and carving the front, will much sooner attract the notice and applause of the passenger, than that of another who has been solicitous only in securing the strength of the beam, and the massy firmness of a deep foundation.

So powerful are the instigations of avarice, and so easy is it to deceive the young, the simple, the innocent, and unsuspecting, that the intercourse among mankind would have been one uniform commerce of deceit, if it had not fortunately happened, that the same want of principle and superfluity of selfishness, which led the deceivers to impose upon mankind, induce them also to

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betray the arts of each other. Rival cheats, in the fury of jealous competition, have discovered the secrets of the juggling art, and opened the eyes of the deluded observers.

But as there is always a rising generation unacquainted with the snares of the deceitful, nets and traps are still laid wherever there is a probability of prey. It becomes those, then, who have seen many of the arts of life, to let others profit by their experience, and prevent the generous game from falling into the wires of the mercenary poacher.

It may be prescribed as a rule which will not often fail in the application, that where extraordinary pretensions are made, either in the manual arts, the trades, or the professions, there is just ground for caution and suspicion. Solid merit and real excellence of every kind, usually confide in their own power of recommending themselves; while ignorance, and superficial skill, naturally endeavour to ensnare by cunning what they cannot earn by desert. There is a delicacy and spirit attendant on real worth and ingenuity, which had rather be without success, than attain it by artifice and arrogant pretension.

The prudent and experienced are generally on their guard against those numerous adventurers, who rely for success on advertisements in the public papers. If there is any difference between the mercer, haberdasher, or wine-merchant who advertises his goods, and him who does not, it is, that the advertiser sells at a dearer price a worse commodity. His shop is a kind of trap, the bait is pretended cheapness; and many a young bird is caught with the chaff of a bargain. A wise man will take care not to lay out his money when things are to be sold at prime cost, and under prime cost, and twenty per cent. cheaper than the rest of the trade. Beware of those generous spirits who

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sell their property, or their industry, *pro publico bono;* beware, as you value your health and your life, of those who will cure you of all diseases with a shilling pill-box; beware of being poisoned by the vintner, who promises you neat as imported; beware of your purse and your credulity, when you are offered to be taught more of the languages and sciences by a new method, in six months, six weeks, or six hours, than thoses who preside over the most approved schools can teach in six or sixteen years. Beware of a thousand artful tricks which are displayed in the newspapers, and which the deceitful heart of man contrives, as the spider weaves his web, to catch those who are unsuspecting, because they are innocent. The true meaning of all pompous pretences and inviting advertisements, is, that their authors being distressed, and, probably, destitute both of character, friends, and merit, find an easy mode of supplying the defect, by digging pitfalls for the unwary, with whom the world must always abound, at the expense of a few shillings in setting each snare. Such, indeed, is the credulity of mankind, that many a quack and pretender has possessed an estate in the corner of a newspaper, equal to large freeholds of dirty acres.

There are few departments in which more instances of deception occur, than in the lower walks of literature. It happens that they who are to be mechanically instrumental in disseminating science and philosophy, and all the productions of human wit, constitute a very numerous body, consisting of many members in extreme indigence, from the author by trade, down to the bookbinder and the printer's devil. Employment must be provided for them all, or both they and their families must want bread. The press must, therefore, be constantly in motion; but what is to supply it? A very

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few presses would be sufficient to prepare for the public view all productions really new and necessary. Compilations are formed under a thousand shapes and disguises: and men of straw, adorned with Doctors' degrees, and the dignity of Fellows of the Royal Society, are created by the fiat of the adventurous publisher, and stand forth as the renowned authors, in all the dignity of a title-page. From these powerful men in buckram issue Grand and Imperial Bibles, new Systems of Geography, Histories of England, and Collections of Voyages, with a permission to read the first number, and return it if not approved, and a promissory note, generously engaging that all numbers, exceeding a certain amount, shall be given gratis. But if any deceit can be excused, perhaps it is such an one as this, which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and communicates much entertaining and useful knowledge among the poor.

There are those who call far less honest arts than these, innocent frauds; but it is well remarked by a very sound moralist, that no frauds are innocent; because they destroy the confidence of society, on which our happiness and convenience in every part of our intercourse with each other, greatly depend. I will venture to add, that he who will cheat without remorse in one thing, will cheat in another whenever he can do it with equal secrecy and impunity. Though tricks in trade, or the deceitful mysteries of a profession, may enable a man to raise a capital house of business, to be in a great way, or to become a good man, as the phrases are in the city; yet they can never be compatible with common honesty, nor render him more truly respectable than the humble adventurer who actually invades your purse by rifling your pocket.

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No. CXXVII.

ON THE PREVAILING TASTE IN POETRY.

SWEET poesy! thou loveliest object of intellectual pursuit—But I am running into raptures, when I intended a dissertation. It is, indeed, difficult not to be transported beyond the limits of criticism, in contemplating the beauties which the magic hand of the poet raises around, with all the creative power of a real enchantment. From the cares of gain, the toils of ambition, the noise, the hurry, the vexation of a disordered world, we rise on the wings of poesy to ethereal regions, where all is sublime and tranquil; or are wafted to visionary scenes, in which are displayed all the delicious sweets of a paradise and an elysium. Away, ye sordid objects; ye pollutions and incumbrances of the pure spirit! Man is not tied down to you. Providence, in compassion to wretched mortals, has given them a power of forsaking this low orb, and soaring a while, all mind, all spirit, all ecstasy, in the car of the swan, or on the wings of the eagle.

Reason alone, with all her pretensions, is seldom sufficient to soothe our cares, and compose our passions; but melody and fancy united with her, are capable of pouring balm into the wounded heart. In all nations, and in all ranks of the people, some species of poetry has been cultivated; and a taste for it was undoubtedly implanted in our nature, that the sore evils of reality might be alleviated by the sweets of fiction. When Pandora's box was opened on mankind, and misery diffused on every side, fancy as well as hope kindly lingered for our consolation.

While we are tracing the love of song from the favoured isles of the Southern Ocean to the regions of Iceland, we are naturally tempted to dwell, with particular attention, on the poetical taste of our own country and our own times.

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I think it is not difficult to perceive, that the admirers of English poetry are divided into two parties. The objects of their love are, perhaps, of equal beauty, though they greatly differ in their air, their dress, the turn of their features, and their complexion. On one side, are the lovers and imitators of Spencer and Milton; and on the other, those of Dryden, Boileau, and Pope.

Now it happens, unfortunately, that those who are in love with one of these forms are, sometimes, so blind to the charms of the other, as to dispute their existence. The author of the Essay on Pope, who was himself a very agreeable poet in the class of mediocrists, and of what I call the old school of English poetry, seems to deny the justice of Mr. Pope's claim to the title of a true poet, and to appropriate to him the subordinate character of a satirical versifier. On the other hand, the authors of the Traveller, and of the Lives of the English Poets, hesitate not to strip the laurels from the brow of the lyric Gray.

Goldsmith, in his Life of Parnell, has invidiously compared the Night Piece on Death to Gray's Elegy; and, in a manner which betrays a little jealousy of a living poet's fame, given the preference to Parnell. There is also a severe censure thrown on the Elegy of Gray, in a collection which Goldsmith published under the title of the beauties of English Poetry. I remember to have heard Goldsmith converse, when I was very young, on several subjects of literature, and make some oblique and severe reflections on the fashionable poetry. I became a convert to his opinion, because I revered his authority. I took up the Odes of Gray with unfavourable prepossessions, and in writing my remarks on them, joined in the censure. I have since read them with great delight; and on comparing their style, and even their obscurity, with many of the finest

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pieces of lyric composition in all antiquity, I find a very great resemblance. I am not ashamed to retract my former opinion, and to pay the tribute of applause to those elegant friends, Gray and Mason. At the same time, while it is as easy to discern that they differ greatly from the school of Dryden and Pope, it is no derogation from their merit to assert, that they are the genuine disciples of Spenser and Milton.

Goldsmith's Traveller is certainly a beautiful poem, and so are Dr. Johnson's Imitations of Juvenal; but they, and a thousand others of the same species, are of a different stamp from the English antique. They are excellent productions in one kind; but not less so are those of Gray and Mason in another. Let both schools flourish and receive their due applause, nor let those who have only acquired a taste for one, treat the other with contempt. Spenser and Milton drew not from a Gothic model, but from the polished Italians, who, though they had lost some of the purity and simplicity of ancient Rome, yet retained much of her elegance. I cannot help thinking that his poetical ideas are confined, who has not observed with delight, the sweet lines, the sweet language, the sweet fancy of Spenser; and who has not been also charmed with some of the smaller pieces of Milton. All tastes, however various, allow Shakespeare's claim to poetry; but it cannot be denied, that some of his best descriptions, and especially those delicious morsels which occur in the form of songs or sonnets, partake much more of the ancient than of the modern school, either English or French; for we may call it English, if we attribute its origin to Pope, and French, if to Boileau.

There seems to be an unreasonable prejudice entertained against blank verse, by those who wish to dictate on the subjects of criticism. It is sufficient, in the

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idea of many, to condemn a poem, that it is written in blank verse. Though one may prefer rhyme upon the whole, yet, as blank verse is susceptible of great variety of music, and of every ornament of diction, it is surely absurd to involve it in any general censure. It may, however, be attributed to this idle prepossession, that Mr. Mason's English Garden seems to be neglected. There is, indeed, a general prejudice against all works which appear to come from that school, and the very severe criticisms of the late biographical preface to the works of Gray will, perhaps, contribute to explode a most delightful style of pure poetry; of poetry conversant solely in the regions of fancy, and clothed in a luminous and musical diction appropriated to itself and most remote from all that is prosaic. Very high commendations are due to Mr. Anstey, to the author of a poetical epistle to Sir William Chambers, to Mr. Hayley, and to several others who are well known to fame for their successful labours in the school of Pope; but, at least, an equal share of praise ought to be paid to the scholars of Milton and Spenser;—such as Mr. Mason, and the two Wartons. With respect to Gray, he has received his tribute of applause from a discerning public, and has certainly deserved it. The heart and the imagination have given it him: and they who can see no beauty in his verse, may perhaps succeed in writing a lampoon, but would probably fall far short of the poet whom they censure, in lyric and elegiac poetry.

None can entertain a higher veneration for our late prefatory biographer of the poets than myself, and I was therefore greatly concerned to see him exposed to censure by an uncandid, not to say an injudicious, piece of criticism on the poems of Gray. He indeed allows the merit of the elegy, but examines and censures the odes with every appearance of wanton malignity. Who but must lament that the severe critic and

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moralist should have been so much under the influence of envy and jealousy, as to treat the fame of his contemporary, the illustrious Gray, with singular harshness, in a work which contains very candid accounts of a Sprat and a Yalden, a Duke and a Broome, and of others, with whom if Gray is compared, he will appear, as Shakespeare says, like Hyperion to a Satyr?

The late collection of poets has restored to temporary life many a sickly and dying poet, who was hastening to his proper place, the tomb of oblivion. Why was any more paper wasted on Dorset, Halifax, Stepney, Walsh, and Blackmore? How can a work pretend to the comprehensive title of the Body of English Poetry, in which the works of Spenser and Shakespeare are omitted to make room for such writers as King or Ambrose Philips? The writer of the prefaces throws the blame from himself on the compilers, whom he was not permitted, or did not endeavour, to control. A selection, formed under the direction of true taste, would have answered the two great ends of the publication, which it has now frustrated; it would have amply paid the booksellers, and reflected honour on English literature. Then should we have seen, in the place of Roscommon and Rochester, Pomfret and Fenton, the works of Goldsmith, of Glover, of Mason, of Aikin, of Carter, of Beattie, of the Wartons, of Anstey, and of many others, who would shine among the Hughes's, Pitts, and Savages, like the moon among the diminished constellations.

Upon the many and excellent living writers of poetry, we may observe, that though the distressful times of war and political animosity are unfavourable to the gentle arts of verse; yet the active and polished genius of this nation seems capable of surmounting all obstacles in letters, as its manly spirit has often borne all before it in the unhappy contests of war.

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No. CXXVIII.

ON THE PECULIAR DANGER OF FALLING INTO INDOLENCE IN A LITERARY AND RETIRED LIFE.

It is certain, that as our ancestors were induced to found colleges by religious motives, so they chiefly intended them to answer the purposes of religion. Those pious benefactors to mankind did not mean to establish seminaries to prepare men for the world, but to teach them to despise it. But more enlightened periods than those in which these worthies lived, have discovered, that man best obeys his Maker when he takes an active part in the duties of society.

A long residence in a college, is, perhaps, scarcely less unfavourable to devotion than to social activity. For devotion depends chiefly on lively affections, exercised and agitated by the vicissitudes of hope and fear in the various transactions and events of human intercourse. He who is almost placed beyond the reach of fortune in the shelter of a cloister, may, indeed, be led by the statutes of the institution to attend his chapel, and doze over his cushion, but he will not feel, in any peculiar manner, the impulse of devotional fervour. The man who is engaged in the busy and honourable duties of active life, flies from the world to the altar for comfort and refreshment; but the cloistered recluse pants, while he is kneeling in all the formalities of religion, for the pleasures and employments of that world from which he is secluded. During several centuries, a great part of mankind was confined in monasteries, solely for the advancement of religion and learning; yet never was the earth more benighted than in those periods by bigotry and ignorance. Nor will any one assert, that, in subsequent times, the improvements in knowledge and religion have been, in any degree, proportioned to the numbers of those who have been separated from the world,

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to facilitate their cultivation. The truth seems to be, that when the common incentives to industry are removed, and all the natural wants supplied without the necessity of exertion, man degenerates, as the pure waters of the river stagnate and become putrid in the pool. At last the boasting possessor of reason contents himself with dreaming "the blank of life along," with no other proofs of existence than the wants of animal nature. Take away love, ambition, and all the changes and chances of this mortal life, and man will be contented to eat, drink, sleep, and die.

Not in colleges alone, though they may be considered as the temples of indolence, but in common life also, the human mind becomes torpid, as the necessity of exertion is diminished. He, who confiding in the possession of a fortune for his happiness, avoids the avocations of a profession, and what he calls the fatiguing parts of study, will soon lose those powers of intellectual activity which he has not resolution to employ. He may gradually degenerate to a level with the irrational creation. He already, in some respects, approaches to the vegetable. And, indeed, when the habits are irretrievably confirmed, it might perhaps be happy, if his nature would permit him to become at last impassive and quiescent; but as spontaneous fermentation takes places in masses of putrefaction, so, in the mind which has ceased to be exercised by its own efforts, there will arise emotions and habits both offensive and dangerous. Pride and envy, conceit and obstinacy, selfishness and sensuality, are among the ugly daughters of indolence in the monastic retreat.

It may appear paradoxical, but it is certainly an opinion authorised by experience, that an active life is the most friendly to contemplation. The fire of the mind, like culinary fire, has burned with a clear and constant flame, when open and ventilated by perpetual

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motion, as it has been smothered and extinguished in smoke, when suffered to remain long without disturbance. The best, and many of the most voluminous writers, acted still more than they wrote. What could be more unlike the life of the cloister than the lives of Xenophon, Julius Cæsar, Erasmus, and a thousand others, whose days were so engaged in negociation, in senates, in battles, in travelling, that it is not easy to conceive how they could find time, even to pen so great a quantity as they certainly composed. But such are the effects of assiduity, of an uninterrupted accumulation of efforts, that he who has been excited to restless activity by the spurs of honour, interest, and a generosity of nature, has frequently accomplished more by himself, than a thousand of his fellow-creatures employed in the same sphere, and furnished, by nature, with equal abilities for improvement. A hackney writer of catch-penny compilations, the editor of a newspaper, the maker of a magazine, will perform, in a few months, a portion of literary labour, which shall infinitely exceed that of whole colleges inhabited by those who slumber, or waste their activity on hounds and horses on the borders of the sedgy Cam and the slowly-winding Charwell.

But it avails little to point out the disorders of literary indolence, without endeavouring to suggest a remedy. It appears then to me, that those whom Providence has blessed with leisure, and the opportunity of spending it in the pursuits of learning, and the liberal pleasures of retirement, too often languish in their pursuits, from neglecting to render them the subjects of debate and conversation. It is the warmth of discussion in free and social meetings which invigorates solitary study, and sends the scholar back to his books with fresh alacrity. The hope of making a figure in a subsequent conversation, the fear of a shameful ex-

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posure, and of appearing inferior to those who are, in a natural and civil view, our equals, will stimulate all our powers, and engage all our attention, while we sit in those very libraries where we once nodded and slumbered over the page of a Homer or a Cicero. Meetings should be established in all literary societies for the communication of remarks and the rehearsal of compositions. But the strictest rules should be prescribed and observed for the preservation of decorum, otherwise ridicule would gradually be introduced, and the feast of reason be converted either to a banquet of jollity, or a tumult of noise and nonsense.

It is right also, that contemplative men, however far removed from the necessity of employment by the favours of fortune, should communicate with mankind, not only in pleasures and amusements, but in real duties and active virtues, either conjugal, paternal, professional, official, or charitable. Something should be engaged in, with such obligations to performance, that an inclination to neglect should be over-ruled by legal compulsion, or the fear of certain loss and shame. The best method of avoiding the wretched state of not knowing what to do, is, to involve oneself in such circumstances as shall force one to do something, and something honourable and useful. The natural indolence of the human heart is found to escape every restraint but the iron arm of necessity. Such is our present condition, that we must be often chained down to our real happiness and our best enjoyment.

And, with respect to the prevention of indolence in an academical life, it would certainly be a happy circumstance, if none were allowed to reside in an university above seven years, who were not actually engaged in the composition of a learned work, or in superintending the education of youth, as tutors, professors, and heads of colleges. A senior fellow, without any

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of these employments, is one of the unhappiest and least useful members of the community.

No. CXXIX.

ON THE MANNERS OF A METROPOLIS.

WHATEVER may be the political advantages of a very populous capital, and I believe they are of a very disputable nature, the moral and physical evils of it are evidently numerous, and destructive of the human race. This observation is, indeed, true of all cities in which too great a proportion of the people is assembled; but I shall confine my present observations to the capital of the British empire.

The junction of Westminster with London, or of the court with the city, is very justly supposed to have a pernicious influence on both; on those who are engaged in the employments of commerce, and on those who are invited, from their paternal mansions, by the court and the senate-house. The courtier communicates to the citizen a love of pleasure, of dissipation, of vanity; and the citizen to the courtier, a veneration of opulence almost amounting to idolatry. The courtier introduces the vicissitudes of taste and fashion; the citizen imitates them, and furnishes, in profusion, the means of their display and gratification. Thus are luxury, and and all its consequent vices and miseries, advanced to as high a degree as they can reach, by the union of ingenuity to invent modes of indulgence, with wealth to supply the materials.

Lovers of pleasure in excess, are always lovers of themselves in the same degree; and their love, with all the characteristical blindness of the passion, commonly injures its object. We shall therefore find selfishness prevailing in the metropolis, and producing all its natural effects of avarice, private gratifications, meanness, servility, and inhospitality. True patriotism and

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public spirit, though the very want of them will often cause the greatest pretensions to them, will seldom be found in the more numerous classes who inhabit the capital. Where money and pleasure are the sole objects of ardent pursuit, public virtue, and indeed all virtue, will be exposed to sale, whenever a purchaser can be found to pay the price. "Money, O ye citizens!" says Horace, in a satirical irony, "is first to be sought; and it is time enough to think of virtue, when you have secured a fortune."

The inhabitants of a great city will often be inhospitable and unneighbourly. Their attention is fixed on advancing and gratifying themselves, and they consider their neighbours as rivals, or at least as not worth cultivating, since they can always buy amusement at the numerous places of public resort and diversion. But in the country, mutual good offices take place, from a mutual desire and necessity of a friendly intercourse. The Londoner hardly knows the name of his next-door neighbour; and in accidents and distress, would as soon think of sending to Rome, as to the next door for comfort and assistance. But in any emergency in a village, every hand is ready to afford relief. Hospitality to strangers still lingers in the distant country, but has long been banished from that region of avarice and selfish profusion, an overgrown city. Pay a visit in Sussex, in Devonshire, in Cornwall, in Wales, in the North, and compare your reception among strangers, with that which you meet with in London and Westminster. Luxury, avarice, and vice, have indeed a natural tendency to annihilate every generous principle, and to harden the heart against all connexions which do not promise to terminate in pleasure or in lucrative advantage.

The secrecy with which crimes can be committed in a crowd, is a powerful temptation. The Londoner

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may be involved in debauchery, and engaged in fraud, without being suspected at home, or in his neighbourhood. In the country, where individuals are all known, the fear of shame, and a principle of pride, often operate, when virtue, honour, and conscience would cease to restrain; for no one can there be guilty of an action remarkably dishonest or immoral without detection. A gentleman who should devote himself to the arts of the swindler, or the practices of the profligate debauchee, in a village or country town, would soon be compelled, by the hisses of infamy, to desert the place, or to live there in solitude. But in a city, even men adorned with the robes of magistracy may proceed, with little notice, in the most scandalous conduct, under the concealment of a crowd.

Weakness of body and weakness of understanding are often found to characterize the inhabitant of the capital. Luxury, want of air, want of sleep, excess in food, and in sensual indulgence, have a natural tendency to debilitate both the body and the mind. And if there were not continual supplies from the North, I know not whether the city would not exhibit the human race in a most lamentable condition of imbecility, folly, distortion, and deformity. Compare the limbs of the volunteer soldiers in the metropolis with those of the rustic militia or regulars; compare the conduct and understanding of him who was born within the sound of Bow bell, and scarcely went beyond it, with those of the hardy native of Yorkshire or Scotland. Compare the willow with the oak.

The extremes of irreligion and enthusiam mark the manners of the capital. These, indeed, are the natural consequences of some among the many bad dispositions already enumerated. Sunday is considered by the thrifty trader as a holiday, on which he may indulge without imprudence. It is therefore distinguished by

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many from the rest of the week, solely by excess, and by vicious indulgences. The parish churches are, with few exceptions, neglected; nor is there a great concourse to any place of worship, except where some enthusiast or hypocrite has opened a receptacle for those who labour under the symptoms of idiotism or insanity. The symptoms are often confirmed under this injudicious course, till they arrive at a degree of real and most melancholy madness.

I have pointed out some peculiar evils in the manners of the metropolis with two intentions. One is, to prevent, in some degree, the prevailing practice of emigrating from the country, from the seats of health and comparative innocence, to that sink of sin, and that grave of the human race, a city too crowded with people, and over-run with every abomination. The other is, to suggest a hint which may alleviate that part of the evil which admits a remedy. The love of money, of distinction, of pleasure, will probably frustrate the former purpose; but the latter, in a day of national distress, or under other circumstances favourable to virtue, may possibly be accomplished.

To promote a reformation of manners, additional authority and efficiency must be given to the clergy and magistrates of London. Both of them are at this time looked upon by the vulgar, both high and low, with some degree of contempt. The churches are left to curates, or poor incumbents, who, in a place where riches are idolized, hold a rank scarcely equal to the keeper of an alehouse or an oil-shop. Are the London clergy, who labour strenuously in their vocation, and on whom so much of the state of morals and Christianity depends, particularly countenanced by the ministry or the bishops? It is parliamentary or borough interest which procures mitres, and stalls, and livings; and though a city curate, or incumbent, should

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convert millions from the error of their ways, he would still be suffered to elbow his way along Cheapside in his thread-bare coat and tattered gown; pointed out and laughed at by every apprentice mounted on his Sunday Bit of Blood and hastening to Hyde Park. The common people will not discriminate. They will despise religion and morals when they see the teachers of them poor, mean, and neglected.

Is it not injurious to the cause of religion, that a London clergyman, who has promoted every charity, and probably reformed great numbers, during thirty or forty years, shall be suffered to live and die with nothing but a curacy and a beggarly lectureship? and that, in the mean time, he who is related to a great man, or connected with members of parliament, though he never preached, and can hardly read, shall be loaded with dignities and pluralities? He who would reform the capital, I repeat, must render the clergy respectable in the eyes of the vulgar, and the magistrates at once honourable and formidable.

No. CXXX.

ON PHILELPHUS AND THEODORE GAZA, POLITE SCHOLARS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THOUGH the admirer of elegant letters will find his sweetest, most solid, and most constant pleasures of the learned kind, in the writings of the Augustan age; yet he will often feel his curiosity powerfully excited, and amply rewarded, by those among the revivers of learning who are distinguished by the politeness of their literary accomplishments. I was lately amusing myself in this pleasant walk of classical literature, when I accidentally met with the Epistles of Philelphus. Though they were not without a few expressions which mark the barbarism of his times, they possess a considerable share of elegance, and partake much of the graces which shine so agreeably in the epistles of Pliny and Cicero.

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Philelphus was born at Tolentino, in Italy, in the year 1398; a very early period for so uncommon an instance of proficiency. He died at Florence in 1480, after having filled a long life with the most laborious application. Let it be remembered, that printing was unknown at that time, and that not only the books which were composed, but which were also read, were often painfully transcribed by the student.

Philelphus was no inconsiderable poet, and was crowned with laurel, according to the fashion of the times, by Alphonso king of Naples. He wrote five different works in verse; and, according to his own account in one of his letters, they consisted of ten books of satires, five books of miscellaneous poems, the Sfortiad in eight books, ten books of epigrams, and three of Greek poems. The number of verses in the whole, as calculated by himself, amounted to thirty-three thousand eight hundred. He has omitted in this computation, his Nicholaus, a poem in two books, and in sapphic verse, which he composed in honour of Pope Nicholas the Fifth, by whom he was greatly esteemed, and who had invited him, by a large present, to undertake the translation of Homer into Latin. He was scarcely less voluminous in prose, but less original, as his prosaic works consist chiefly of translations from Lysias, Aristotle, Xeonophon, Hippocrates, and Plutarch; though he has also written two books of Convivia, three entitled Commentationes Florentinæ, five on Moral Discipline, and the Life and Exploits of Francis Sfortia, in compliment to whom the Sfortiad, which has been mentioned already, was composed. There are also Orations, of which Erasmus speaks rather unfavourably in his Ciceronianus.

But the only work of Philelphus which I have had an opportunity of inspecting, is the Epistles, of which this prolific author, in the course of a long life, has written no fewer than thirty-seven books. These abound with

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eloquence, and with such literary anecdotes and particulars, as cannot but afford amusement to the curious scholar. Though Morhoff rather slights them, yet Erasmus, a much better judge, acknowledges that they resemble Cicero.

I present the reader with an extract from one of them, which I happen to be reading at the time I am writing, and which characterizes the spirit of the author, and the great attachment which he had to books. Cardinal Bessario, the patriarch of Constantinople, had applied to him, desiring him to sell his copy of Homer's Iliad; to which request Philelphus thus replies: "That copy of Homer's Iliad which the very learned Theodore Gaza has written out for me, I value so much, that I would not part with it to any man, for all the treasures of Crœsus. I am really surprised that you should think that I, who always had the character of generosity, should be so much changed as to be capable of avarice. I have learned to give away many things, but to sell nothing; particularly books; than which I esteem nothing of greater value. But this book of Homer is so dear to my heart, and affords me so much pleasure, that life itself can furnish nothing more delightful. Therefore pardon me in this one thing. If I can gratify you in any thing else, you may command me, and shall not be disappointed." My paper will not admit a number of citations, and I will therefore content myself with referring the lover of elegant latinity and literary anecdotes to the original collection.

It is a circumstance which adds to our surprise in contemplating this example of literary industry, that Philelphus was very much engaged in wars and in embassies: so true is it, that the greatest exertions of mind are compatible with the most active life. His writings are not free from faults, or from that inaccu-

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racy which proceeds from haste; but he is still a stupendous instance of diligence and excellence. Who but must lament, that, after having done so much to enlighten a dark age, and enjoyed the friendship of princes and pontiffs, he should die in his eighty-second year so poor, that his bed, and the utensils of his kitchen, were sold to pay the expenses of his funeral! But few men of real genius love money; and of the liberality of Philelphus, the fragment which I have inserted is an ample testimony.

I hope it will not be tedious or disagreeable to the reader, if I mention a few circumstances relative to the friend and contemporary of Philelphus, Theodore Gaza, of whom he speaks in his epistle, as having transcribed for him a very fine copy of Homer's Iliad.

Theodore Gaza was born at Thessalonica, but received a part of his education in Italy. He was an elegant writer both in the Greek and the Latin languages; but he displayed his abilities chiefly in translation; a most useful labour when the learned languages were imperfectly understood. He translated parts of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Hippocrates, into Latin; and the treatise of Cicero on Old Age into Greek. He wrote also a treatise on Grammar in four books, which has been greatly celebrated. Greek learning, and indeed all ancient learning, is greatly indebted to this distinguished reviver of it, Theodore Gaza.

But he also was unfortunate, and adds to the number of those whom Providence has exhibited to prove, that the rewards of virtuous and useful labour do not consist in riches, honours, or any thing else which the rulers of this world are able to bestow. Poor Gaza had dedicated his Translation and Commentaries on Aristotle's Book on Animals to Pope Sixtus the Fourth, in hopes of procuring from his patronage a little provision for his old age. The Pope gave him

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only a purse with a few pieces in it, and accompanied his gift with a manner which induced Gaza to conclude that it was the last favour he should receive. Gaza received it in silence; and as he walked home, all melancholy and indignant, along the banks of the Tiber, he threw the purse into the stream, and soon after died of vexation and disappointment.

I have introduced these examples with a view to animate the student to industry; and at the same time, to teach him to seek his reward in his own heart, in the approbation of Heaven, in the private satisfactions of study; and not to depend too much on princes, pontiffs, or even popular favour.

No. CXXXI.

ON THE INEFFICACY OF THAT STYLE OF SPEAKING AND WRITING WHICH MAY BE CALLED THE FROTHY.

On the decline of ancient learning and Augustan taste, there arose a number of sophists and declaimers, who, in pursuit of an excellence in style superior to the natural graces of a better age, deviated into a most contemptible affectation. Quaint, awkward, and frivolous as were their embellishments, they paid their principal attention to them, and totally neglected solidity of sense and substantial truth. This style of writing characterizes the decline of genuine and manly eloquence. It is, indeed, like the hectic efflorescence on the countenance of an invalid far advanced in a consumption.

In several departments of modern literature, and even in our own country, a style of writing has been used which very much resembles the sophistical and declamatory, which appeared in the decline and fall of Rome. But I know not that it has been so conspicuous in any one of our publications, as in the popular addresses from the pulpit. Several of the favourite

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preachers in the capital, who seldom fail to fill every church in which they harangue, and to raise the largest contributions to charity-schools, have presented the public with their sermons, in order to make the experiment, whether that oratory which delights the lower orders in the pulpit, would be equally well received in the closet. It was an unhappy experiment for the reputation of the orators; for there hardly ever appeared more remarkable specimens of florid, frothy, and meretricious eloquence. Sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals, are descriptions of it truly emblematical. If it has any sweetness, it is a sweetness which cloys, and makes you sick; if there is any brightness, it is a brightness which dazzles and gives you pain; if there is any gold, it is not like the bullion, but like the leaf, expanded to a superficies almost impalpable under the operation of the goldbeater. Indeed, this species of style is very well described by the common epithet of the frothy; but, as a means of supplying aliment, or as a constant diet, what is a syllabub to a sirloin?

Indeed, almost all the popular preachers in London have found it easier to themselves, and more agreeable to an illiterate and unthinking audience, to address the ears, the fancy, and the passions, than to appeal to reason and judgment. If their discourses were found to produce any better effect on their hearers, than that of furnishing an amusement for a leisure half-hour, it would be wrong to censure them, merely because they are offensive to a delicate and refined or classical taste. But the truth is, that they excite only transient emotions, which, though they may last long enough to draw from the hearer a shilling for the churchwarden's plate at the church door, will seldom go home with him, or produce an uniform influence on his conduct. He goes to hear a fine preacher as he goes to a play,

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to be entertained when he has nothing else to do; he pays for his entertainment at the door, and gives himself no further concern on such subjects, but to look out for a similar pastime, when his shop, or warehouse, or counting-house, are shut up, through the necessity of complying with the laws and customs of the country.

It may be said that, though a taste formed by the pure models of Greece and Rome may reprobate the frothy style, yet, since it is found to entertain the vulgar of a great capital, sometimes usefully, and always innocently, it ought not to be exploded. But, perhaps, it cannot be granted that it does entertain them either usefully or innocently. It certainly gives them wrong ideas of religion, and teaches them to neglect and despise the dispassionate suggestions of reason. But it is one of the principal objections to this popular or frothy preaching, that it allures men from their own parish churches, and induces them to desert the pulpit of a modest and regularly-educated clergyman, for some noisy and bold, some ignorant and hypocritical pretender. It leads them from the light of the sun to those meteors and vapours, whose dancing and uncertain gleam conducts them into quagmires. There are few parishes in the metropolis which do not contain some thousands of inhabitants; but you shall often find in their respective churches not more than one hundred, and sometimes scarcely half that number. Whither are they gone? Many, indeed, are carousing in the delectable retreats of their country houses; but many are also gone to the new-built chapels, where some silver-tongued orator is preaching himself, with all the pathos of a white handkerchief, the splendour of a diamond ring, the smartness of a well-dressed head, and the grimaces of an impostor. Religion must lose much of her venerable air, when, instead of the decent clothing of a chaste and

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venerable matron, she is represented with the tawdry and flimsy garment, the painted cheeks, the glass earrings, the false brilliants of the faithless courtezan.

I think I may confidently affirm, that the frothy style would not be tolerated at the bar or in the senate. It would be thought too trifling for the important subjects of property and politics. It would be an object of ridicule wherever the business of the world is transacted. And shall that oratory which is hooted from the forum, not only take refuge, but lift up her head in triumph, in the pulpit? It is not surprising that men of sense pass by wagging their heads, when they find an orator haranguing in a church with all the affected language and sentiments of a fashionable auctioneer. The eloquence which has distinguished many of the most favourite preachers, and writers of pulpit-harangues, is not that of St. Paul, of Demosthenes, of Cicero; but of those great masters of florid description, the orators of the hammer.

I believe it will appear consistent with reason, that a peculiar degree of gravity and solidity, far exceeding that of the senate or bar, is required to produce the due effect of pulpit oratory. Practical divinity is the gravest species of moral philosophy, deriving additional dignity and force from revelation. The appearance of truth and simplicity is its most becoming ornament. To apply to it the little arts of rhetoric, and the petty graces of affectation, would be like painting, in tawdry and variegated colours, those Corinthian columns of St. Paul's cathedral which derive all their beauties from their simple and symmetrical grandeur. When we go to church, we hope to hear salutary truth, and to receive improvement of mind and morals. When we wish to be only amused, we shall repair to the opera and the puppet-show.

I will take the liberty to hint to the young and

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fashionable divines of the chapels at the polite end of the town, who are in general smitten with the false graces of style and delivery, that their congregation would be much more edified, if, instead of trite essays, in what they call fine language, they would preach sermons, properly so called, in the plain style of truth, simplicity and Scripture. Let them also take care, as they will answer it to Him in whose name they ascend the pulpit, not to preach themselves, but the Gospel; not to be so solicitous in the display of a white hand, as of a pure heart; of a diamond ring, as of a shining example.

No. CXXXII.

ON THE GENIUS OF ERASMUS.

Batavia and Bœotia are by no means remarkable for the production of genius; but Bœotia may boast her Pindar, and Batavia her Erasmus.

I mean not to consider the theological opinions of Erasmus, but his learning and his genius; and of these I may venture to affirm, that if Erasmus had lived in an Augustan age, they would have advanced him to a rank among the best of the classics. But the theology and theologians of his times were at open war with the graces of taste and elegance; and, considering the authority which they possessed, and the scarcity of any other writings than those which proceeded from the cloister, it may be pronounced almost impossible to have lived and written in that age, without contracting a tinge of the prevailing barbarism.

The style of Erasmus is not therefore perfectly pure and classical, though it partakes of those qualities in a high degree; but it is his own, and it has a native charm which renders it agreeable. It is remarkable for vivacity. I would not advise a young man to view it as a finished model; nor, indeed, to be much con-

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versant in the works of Erasmus, or any modern writer of Latin, till his taste be formed, and his judgment regulated, by Terence, Virgil, Cæsar, and Cicero.

But he whose mind is mature, and whose comprehensive powers are capable of grasping all pre-eminent authors, whether ancient or modern, will receive pleasure and improvement, in a great degree, from the writings of Erasmus. They have usually been studied only by divines, and for theological information. But I warmly recommend them to the lover of philology or of classical learning, as furnishing a dish for such a palate both plentiful and highly seasoned. Erasmus was born to cultivate the *literæ humaniores*, or the politer parts of learning; and I have often lamented, that he should have been diverted from those flowery paths into the rough and thorny roads of controversial divinity.

The Colloquies, or Dialogues of Erasmus, are often used to initiate boys, at an early age, in the study of the Latin language. They are uncommonly lively, entertaining, and instructive; and as there is not much danger of corrupting the style of a very young boy, there are perhaps few books better adapted to the purpose. Indeed, we must not do Erasmus the injustice to assert that he is devoid of elegance in style; for though, wherever he expresses theological ideas, he is almost under the necessity of using words unknown to the writers of a better age, yet, on other occasions, he abounds with phrases of the purest and the sweetest latinity. Neither are his Dialogues to be considered as fit only for boys, since they abound in wit, humour, good sense, and in allusions which strongly mark the fertility of the mind from which they originated. In a comparative estimate of genius, according to its kinds and degrees, I should not hesitate to place Erasmus in the same class with Lucian. There is, indeed, a season-

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ing of salt in all his writings in which the necessity of being grave did not forbid him to be facetious. The Dialogue entitled *Ciceronianus* is an admirable specimen of judgment and pleasantry.

His Praise of Folly is a most humorous satire, and reflects no less honour on the inventive powers, than on the good sense of its author; as it was written if I mistake not, in the space of one week, for the amusement of himself and Sir Thomas More, at whose house he was upon a visit. It made its author many enemies; but his genius rose like the arm of a giant against a host of pigmies, and defeated them all after a short conflict. His forgiveness of the vain and angry Dorpius, who first attacked him, evinces his magnanimity and goodness of heart. Spite and envy may secretly undermine, but can seldom make an open and successful attack on the fortress of true genius and sincere virtue.

But the Epistles of Erasmus will, perhaps, be found to furnish the student in philology with more amusement than any other of his works. They are, indeed, a valuable treasure of curious information. Their clear and lively language, their poignant wit, and good-natured humour, render it difficult to lay them aside, when once we are engaged in the perusal of them. They are very numerous, as they appear in the editions which we possess, but these are by no means all which Erasmus wrote. He complains of being obliged to write so many, that there was not a possibility of taking copies of them all. A great share of knowledge of the world, and of human nature, as well as of letters and literary characters, may be collected from them by the attentive reader. They are a treasure of wit, humour, and good sense.

But, indeed, to whatever part of his voluminous works we turn our attention, we can scarcely avoid

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feeling sentiments of pleasure and surprise. He has written more than many students were ever able to read. He has written so excellently, that all the learned, except a few envious contemporaries, from his own time to ours, have uniformly considered him as a prodigy. And let it never be forgotten, that, under Providence, he owed his education and subsequent improvements entirely to himself. He was used ill and neglected in his youth. He abounded neither in books nor in instructors; but he possessed a genius and a love of letters, before which all obstacles usually give way, like the Alps to an Hannibal.

It adds greatly to our wonder, in contemplating his large and crowded tomes, when we recollect that he spent his life in a most unsettled state, and in constantly travelling from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom. But his mind was employed in study wherever he went, and he composed many parts of his works as he rode on his horse. He was also attacked by many enemies; and though he was placable, yet as he was also irascible, much of that time and attention, which would otherwise have been devoted to calm contemplation and works of general utility, was necessarily lost in personal controversy.

He was certainly the greatest man of his time. Popes, kings, cardinals, and archbishops, hide their diminished heads in his presence. One is, indeed, almost tempted to laugh when one surveys a group of stupid personages, with crowns and mitres, riches and titles, sitting on their thrones and in their cathedrals, yet bowing, with an homage at once abject and involuntary, to the personal merit of the poor, neglected, unpreferred Erasmus. He was permitted by Providence to perform a pilgrimage through this world without ecclesiastical riches or dignity; he was designed as an instance to prove, that great merit is its own reward,

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and that temporal distinctions are allowed, like trifles beneath the notice of Heaven, to fall indiscriminately on the deserving and the undeserving, the learned and the ignorant. Erasmus had no mitre; but he had the internal satisfactions of genius; he had glory, he had liberty, and the wearers of mitres crouched at the awful dignity of his personal merit.

Though I am sensible he wants no addition to his fame, and could not receive any from my applause, yet I have ventured to pay him this humble tribute, as the oblation of gratitude for the great and repeated pleasure which his works once afforded me in the retirement of a college, and still afford me in the occupations of an active life.

No. CXXXIII.

ON THE EDUCATION OF A PRINCE.

An opinion has often prevailed, that the education of a prince ought to be totally different from that of other gentlemen, and that any remarkable share of learning would disgrace him. I shall not hesitate to affirm, that they were the enemies of princes who advanced such an opinion; for nothing can contribute more effectually to the general abolition of the monarchical form of government, than to render the character and person of the monarch contemptible. In an age and country enlightened like our own, if a king were the only gentleman unadorned with a liberal education, his kingly office would contribute to render his person less dignified. Though he should sit on his throne, surrounded by his cringing courtiers and his standing army; and though he should number among the provinces of his empire, the regions of the east and the west; yet, in the eyes of every sensible and independent spectator, his personal littleness would be rendered still less, by a comparison with his hereditary and official magnificence.

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Every friend therefore to a reigning family, every lover of political tranquillity and of regular subordination, will wish to augment the personal accomplishments of that youth who is destined, at some future period, to wield a sceptre. He will recollect, that the mind of a prince comes from the hand of nature, in a state no less rude than the mind of a peasant; and that, if it is not formed by early culture, it will soon become much ruder, more refractory, and more vicious under the many unfavourable circumstances of an exalted station. It will be readily allowed, that a peculiar polish, enlargement, and liberality is required in him who is to look with a comprehensive eye through all the ranks of society, and estimate the true interests of nations, and of mankind at large. Both the heart and the understanding of such an one should be expanded to the utmost degree of possible dilatation.

But no method of culture is found so much to fertilize the human mind, as that kind of discipline which is called the classical. A prince, therefore, though he should certainly be educated in private, ought to be trained according to the modes which the experience of ages has established as the most successful in a public seminary. No whimsical systems of pragmatical and conceited tutors should be admitted. The boy should be taught his grammar like other boys; for though there is indeed a royal game of the goose, I never yet heard of a royal method of learning Latin and Greek, and if there be such an one, the success of it still remains among the arcana of state.

An heir to a crown should certainly learn the ancient as well as the modern languages; and he will not be able to learn them effectually, without learning them radically. Away then with the indolence and indulgence which grandeur foolishly claims as a happy privilege! Let the boy, if you wish him to maintain the

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dignity of a man and a king, be early inured to mental labour. Let his memory, while a child, be exercised in learning the rules of Lilly's Grammar. Let him be confined to his books and papers all the morning, and part of the evening, from the age of five to nineteen. The maids of honour will cry out, Shame! the sycophantic herd of young nobleman, who crowd, with all the servility of their own footmen, around a throne, will repine that they cannot have an opportunity of introducing themselves to the familiarity of the future king; but regard neither the foolish exclamations of vanity, nor the mean murmurs of self-interest. Proceed with him regularly from the fables of Phædrus to the philosophy of Cicero, from the Cyropædia of Xenophon to the histories and politics of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Sallust, and Polybius. Let his ear be familiarized to the fine language and sentiments of Cicero and Demosthenes, and his heart ennobled by the examples of the brightest characters of Greece and Rome.

Why should his superintendents be so cruel as not to cultivate in him a taste for the beauties of poetry, or leave him unacquainted with Homer and Virgil? An elegant taste, a humanized disposition, an enlightened understanding, will adorn him more than the jewels in his crown, or the robes of royalty. It will give him an internal source of happiness, and will teach him rather to seek his pleasures in a humane and generous conduct, than in the display of pomp, or the indulgence of luxury. A prince, with a mind uncultivated, will too often take his chief delight in mischief, in vice, or in unprincely occupations; but he, whose understanding is illuminated and heart purified by a right discipline, will deserve a title which has been often unjustly claimed—that of Heaven's vicegerent.

When, by the close application of ten or twelve

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years, a firm and broad basis is laid of ancient learning, let the stripling be introduced to the avenues of all the parts of human knowledge. Let the years which elapse till he is the age of three or four and twenty, be employed in acquiring proper ideas of all the objects, whether natural or civil, which surround him, under the tuition of some enlightened Mentor, who possesses not only official and titular, but personal authority; under one who is not frightened by the laughter of fashion, of dissipation, or of false philosophy, from filling his pupil's mind with moral virtues, and a sincere, not a political, veneration for Christianity.

All this is a general preparation for the particular pursuits which become a king, and these are law and politics. I mean not the narrow system of a mercenary practitioner and a cunning statesman, but the general principles of justice and equity; the wise maxims of government, as it is instituted for the diffusion of happiness and virtue among the individuals of a nation, and not for the extension of empire, or the accumulation of destructive opulence. What a situation is a throne for the indulgence of the feelings of a Christian, and of a compassionate friend to wretched human nature! I would not, indeed, refer a prince for maxims of equity and government to Puffendorf and Grotius, the dull and unfeeling deliberators of questions on which a good heart and understanding can intuitively decide; but to his own heart, to his own enlightened reason, to the page of Scripture, and to the volumes of authenticated history. Let him appropriate the lessons of Telemachus.

Princes have been almost uniformly confined in their views to the narrow systems of worldly politicians and of interested courtiers. False grandeur has fascinated themselves and their subjects. National prosperity has been estimated by fleets and armies, commerce and

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revenues. The morals, the health, the religion of the individuals, are considerations which do not always claim the attention of a cabinet, but are sometimes discarded as subjects of declamation in the church or in the schools. But what is national grandeur, glory, or prosperity, independently of the virtue and happiness of the individuals who constitute the nation?

Imagination triumphs in the prospect of a golden age, when princes, and all who are concerned in the executive parts of government, shall be early formed to virtue, to learning, to humanity, to religion. How happy, it has been said, would it be if philosophers, justly so called, were kings, or kings philosophers!

No. CXXXIV.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE ART OF PRINTING.

That the desire of knowledge for its own sake, is an adventitious passion, unknown to nature, and to be classed among the refinements of civilisation, is an opinion unsupported by experience, and derogatory from the native dignity of a rational creature. Fancy and sentiment, the powers of the intellect, and the feelings of the heart, are, perhaps, by nature equally strong and susceptible in the rude Indian and in the polished member of an established community. Perhaps these similar powers would be equally fit for exertion, and these propensities equally importunate for gratification, if the savage were not constantly engaged in providing for that necessary sustenance, which, without his own interposition, is commonly secured in every civilised country to the philosopher.

The pupil of nature, under all his disadvantages, feels the impulse of a species of literary curiosity, and seeks its satisfaction. He possesses the faculty of memory; he must, therefore, without the co-operation of his will, remember many of the impressions received

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by the senses; he has a power of reflection, which will teach him to reason and draw inferences, without designing it, from the objects of his experience and observation. He finds within himself an imagination capable of recalling past ideas of pleasure and pain, and apt to be delighted by beauty, novelty, and grandeur. Every natural exertion of natural faculties, is attended with satisfaction. He feels it from the unpremeditated exertions of the mental powers; he tacitly acknowledges it to be congenial to his mind, and of course endeavours to repeat, to extend, and to prolong it: but the objects which fall under the notice of his own senses and his personal experience, are insufficient in number and importance to satisfy his capacity. He is led to inquire what passed among his forefathers, and in his turn is requested by his progeny to communicate his own remarks or recitals, superadded to the information of his ancestors.

Such, probably, is the origin of tradition; a mode of communicating knowledge once universal, and still, perhaps, subsisting in the newly discovered islands of the Pacific Ocean, on the banks of the Senegal, and at the foot of the Andes. Beneath the shade of his plantain, the patriarch Indian still recites the divine origin of his tribe or family, the warlike actions of his ancestors, and of his own personal prowess. The attentive audience carry away the tale, and supply the defects of memory by the aid of imagination. The story spreads, time gives it a sanction, and at last it is found to constitute the most authentic history, however obscure and fabulous, of the origin of a nation, after it has emerged from barbarism, and is become the seat of arts and learning.

In the earliest and rudest state of literature, if we may give that appellation to the efforts of the intellectual faculties where letters are unknown, is often

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produced the most animated, and perhaps most perfect, though least artificial, poetry. Historic truth is, indeed, little regarded in the infancy of society, as it is addressed to reason rather than to fancy; but poetic composition appears with marks of genius approaching to inspiration. From his memory, or his invention, or from both, the savage is heard to pour forth the song of war, and to warble the notes of love, warm with the sentiments of a feeling heart, and compensating the want of regularity and grace, by the strength and vivacity of natural expression.

If we believe the representations of some writers, poems equal in length to the most celebrated epopeas of Greece and Rome, have been handed down, without the aid of letters, from the remotest antiquity to the present day; and in our own country and times, traditionary tales, poetic and prosaic, are known to abound in that lowest class among us, who are yet unacquainted with the elements of learning. The tenant of the cottage, stupid and incurious as he may appear to the polite observer, possesses his fund of entertaining knowledge, and knows how to enliven the winter evening with tales of fairies, giants, and enchantments, which he believed on the word of his progenitors, and which his hearers receive with equal pleasure and credulity, intending to transmit them to the rising generation.

The early appearance and the universality of traditionary learning, seems to establish the opinion, that the love of knowledge is among the first and most importunate desires inherent to the human heart. We see it believing absurdity, and admiring nonsense; we see it bearing one of the strongest characteristics of natural inclinations, a proneness to neglect reason in pursuit of gratification.

This ardent love of knowledge, which gave rise

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to tradition, soon invented improvements which superseded its general necessity. Tradition was soon found to be attended with great inconveniences, and to be defective in its most perfect state. A thousand important circumstances must necessarily elude the most retentive memory; and, beside the evils resulting from the weakness of that faculty, and from the general inclination to exaggerate and embellish the simplicity of truth, the want of written standards to appeal to, afforded constant opportunities for imposition. Uprightness of intention, and strength of memory, were not always, united in those who undertook the recital of events. Accuracy and justness of representation were rare; and the civil history of every people, without a single exception, is, in its first periods, dark and incoherent; such, indeed, as might be expected from oral authority.

The inventor of means to supply the defects of memory, and to preclude the opportunity of deceit, it is obvious to conclude, would be considered as a great benefactor of mankind, and elevated by the exuberant gratitude of a rude age above the rank of humanity. To Theuth, the inventor of letters among the Egyptians, and to the same personage, under the name of Hermes among the Greeks, divine honours were paid; an apotheosis surely more justifiable on principles of reason, than that of Bacchus the cultivator of the vine, or of Hercules the cleanser of a stable.

To communicate their discovery, the inventors of literary symbols found it necessary to make them on some substance susceptible of impression or penetration. What that substance was, is a subject of curious, but unimportant inquiry. The original mode of inscribing the newly discovered characters, however conducted, was probably very imperfect; but, as it happens in all discoveries of momentous consequence, the idea of it,

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once started, was pursued with that general ardour and attention, which never fails to produce a great improvement. The stone, the palm-leaf, the biblos or bark of the linden tree, the leaden tablet, the papyrus, the parchment, and the pugillares, respectively served, as progressive advancement suggested, or as convenience required, to receive the written lucubrations of the ancient poet, philosopher, legislator, and historian.

That many of the noblest efforts of ancient genius, though committed to writing on substances so frail as the papyrus, and so subject to erasure as the waxen tablet, should have reached the present age, is an event only to be accounted for by supposing, that their conspicuous beauties, or experienced importance, occasioned uncommon vigilance and solicitude in their preservation.

At a very late period, a substance formed of macerated linen, was found superior in beauty, convenience, and duration, and better adapted to the purposes of literature, than all the prior devices of mechanical ingenuity. It derived its name from the flag that grew on the banks of the Nile, which, though it in some degree resembled, it greatly excelled. Porous, yet of firm contexture, it admitted the inscription of characters with a facility equalled only by the retention with which it preserved them. By the ease with which it is procured and inscribed, it rescued the ancient authors from the possibility of oblivion, and may strictly be said to have formed that monument more durable than brass, which a celebrated poet prophesied to himself with a confidence, justified at length by the accomplishment of his prediction.

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No. CXXXV.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF PRINTING: WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IT.

The business of transcribing the remains of Grecian and Roman literature, became an useful, an innocent, and pleasing employ to many of those who, in the dark ages, would else have pined in the listless langour of monastic retirement. Exempt from the avocations of civil life, incapable of literary exertions from the want of books and opportunities of improvement, they devoted the frequent intervals of religious duty to the transcription of authors whom they often little understood. The servile office of a mere copyist was not disdained by those who knew not to invent; and the writers in the *scriptorium*, a place in monasteries devoted to copying, were inspired with an emulation to excel, in the beauty and variety of their illuminations, the fidelity of their copy, and the multitude of their performances.

But when every letter of every copy was to be formed by the immediate operation of the hand, the most persevering assiduity could effect but little. The old manuscripts appear not to have been written with the rapidity of a modern transcriber, but with formal stiffness, or a correct elegance, equally inconsistent with expedition. They were therefore rare, and consequently more valued; and, whenever sold, were sold at a great price. Few, indeed, but crowned and mitred heads, or incorporated communities, were able to procure a number sufficient to merit the appellation of a library; and even the boasted libraries of princes and prelates, were such as are now easily exceeded by every private collection. To be poor, with whatever ability or inclination, was, at one time, an insurmountable obstacle to literary improvement: and, perhaps, we

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indulge an unreasonable acrimony in our general censure of monkish sloth and ignorance, not considering that an involuntary fault ceases to be blameable; that ignorance is necessary where the means of information are scarce; and that sloth is not to be avoided, where the requisites of proper employment are not attainable without great expense or earnest solicitation.

It was, perhaps, less with a view to obviate these inconveniences, than from the interested motives of deriving greater gain by exacting the usual price for copies multiplied with more ease and expedition, that a new mode was at length practised, derived from the invention of the art of printing; a discovery which, of all those recorded in civil history, is of the most important and extensive consequence.

That the first productions of the press were intended to pass for manuscripts, we are led to conclude from the resemblance of the type to the written characters, from the omission of illuminations, which were to be supplied by the pen to facilitate the deception, and from the inventor's concealment of his process, so far as to incur suspicion of witchcraft or magic, by which alone the first observers could account for the extraordinary multiplication of the transcripts.

But the deceit was soon detected. The perfect resemblance in the shape of the letters, in the place and number of the words on every page, the singular correctness, and, above all, the numerous copies of the same author, inevitably led to a discovery of the secret. To conceal it, indeed, was no longer desired, when experience had suggested the great lucrative advantages and the practicability of multiplying books without end by the process newly invented. It soon appeared, though it was not obvious at first, that the new mode would be more agreeable to the reader, as well as easier to the copyist, and that printed books would

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universally supersede the use of manuscripts, from a choice founded on judicious preference. The art of printing was soon professed as a trade, and the business of copying, which had once afforded only amusement or gain to the curious and the idle, became the constant employment and support of a numerous tribe of artisans, and constituted a very considerable source of mercantile advantage.

Of an art, which, though it had yet acquired but small degrees of perfection, appeared of most extensive utility in religion, in politics, in literature, and even in commerce, no labour has been spared to investigate the history; but, unfortunately, the inquirers into the origin of arts, instigated by the zeal of minute curiosity to push their researches too far, often discover them so rude, obvious, and inartificial at their commencement, as to reflect very little honour on those whom they ostentatiously exhibit as the earliest inventors. Such has been the result of the investigations of those who, dissatisfied with the commonly-received opinions on the date of the invention of printing, pretend to have discovered traces of it many years before the first production of Faustus, in 1457; and it is true, that the Speculum Salutis, and a few other books are extant, which, on good reasons, are judged to have been stamped, not printed *secundum artem*, long before the erection of a press at Mentz; but the mode in which they were executed, like the Chinese, bears but little resemblance to the art of printing properly so called; it appears not, by any historical memoir, to have suggested the first hint of it, and is too imperfect to deserve notice as even the infant state of this momentous invention.

National pride, like the pride of individuals, is often founded on slight or dubious pretensions. Thus have Germany and Holland contended, with all the warmth

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of party, for the imaginary honour of giving birth to the inventor of printing, who, after all, was probably led to the discovery, not by the enlarged views of public utility, but by fortunate circumstances concurring with the desire of private and pecuniary advantage: but though the history of printing, like all other histories, is in some degree obscure and doubtful at its earliest period; though Strasburg has boasted of Mentel, and Haarlem of Coster, as the inventor; yet is there great reason to conclude, that the few arguments advanced in their favour are supported only by forgery and falsehood: and we may safely assert, with the majority of writers, and with the general voice of Europe, that the time of the invention was about the year 1440; the place Mentz, and the persons Guttenburg, Faustus, and Schaeffer, in conjunction.

He who wishes to trace the art in its gradual progress, from the wooden and immoveable letter to the moveable and metal type, and to the completion of the whole contrivance, will receive satisfactory information from the annals of the elaborate Mattaire. In the mean time, the essayist will avoid the repetition of facts already too well known and established to admit additional illustration, and will think himself more properly employed in making reflections on the literary, the moral, the political, and the religious effects which have resulted from the invention.

It is, indeed, generally true, that the history of a mechanical art affords but insipid entertainment to a mind which is tinctured with the liberality of philosophy and the elegance of classical literature. It often exhibits manual excellence united with such meanness of sentiment and vulgarity of manners, as unavoidably mingle disgust with admiration: but to the truth of this general remark, the annals of typography are a

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singular exception. Many are recorded to have laboured at the press, whose literary attainments would have done honour to the chair of a professor. By their annotations, they illustrated the sense and spirit of those authors, the letter of whose writings they embellished by the most beautiful and accurate impressions.

The names of the Aldi, of Robert and Henry Stephans, of Turnebus, and of many more who united mechanical ingenuity with profound erudition, will ever be remembered with respect and gratitude by the votary of ancient learning. Happily for letters, at a time when the valuable works of antiquity were contained in manuscripts, sometimes illegibly written, and often mutilated or corrupted, a number of men arose whose knowledge and sagacity, though artisans or mechanics, enabled them to ascertain and exhibit, by the newly discovered art, the genuine reading. Such men were greater benefactors to mankind, than many who have been more celebrated; nor is it an ill-grounded glory which Italy derives from her Manutii, Germany from her Froben, France from her Stephani, the Netherlands from their Plantin, and England from her Caxton.

Every lover of accurate editions looks back with regret on those times when an Erasmus corrected what an Aldus printed; when, like the painter of antiquity, a printer exposed his production to the passenger and solicited censure; and when the legislature of a great nation provided by a statute, with a penalty, for the correctness of publications.

To prefer, with implicit attachment, all the earlier productions of the art to the more recent, were to be actuated with the narrow spirit of a typographical virtuoso; yet, the truth is, what indeed was to be expected from the superior learning of those who were

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formerly concerned in the process, they surpass the more splendid editions of later times in the one great excellence of correctness. It is true, indeed, that the fungous production of the modern writer, appears with a splendour of paper, and brilliancy of type, unknown in the fifteenth century: and, if the work is written in the vernacular language, and on a familiar subject, is perhaps sufficiently correct. It is true likewise, that, considering the expedition of the artisan, the degree of correctness with which the common papers of intelligence appear is really wonderful, and affords a striking instance how much industry can effect, when stimulated to exertion by the hope of that abundant gain, which our more than Athenian love of political information constantly supplies. Of such dispatch, a Plantin would, perhaps, have denied the possibility. But books of learning, especially when written in the dead languages, are more slowly brought forth, and by no means with equal perfection. The mistaken avarice, the careless precipitation, and the gross ignorance of some modern typographers, often frustrate all the past labour of correctors and commentators, who have toiled with aching eyes in the revisal of proof sheets, and in the collation of manuscripts. The editions of Greek and Latin classics produced within these few years from the English press, are deplorably incorrect, and seem to indicate a declension of an art which has afforded light and given honour to empires. The paper and the type are beautiful; but they are both spoiled by the want of learned and accurate correction. A corrector should read with a microscopic eye; and the reward of honour and emolument should await his faithful labours. His work is the work of the head; the rest is mechanical.

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No. CXXXVI.

ON THE MORAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS EFFECTS OF PRINTING: WITH CONCLUDING REMARKS.

By one of those laudable artifices which prevent private avarice from withholding public benefits, the art of printing was stolen from Haarlem, and brought to Oxford by Frederic Corsellis. But while we advert to the introduction of printing into England, not to commemorate the names of Bouchier, Turnour, and Caxton, who were most instrumental to it, would be an omission equally negligent and ungrateful. Nor should the tribute of praise be any longer withheld by neglect from earl Tiptoft and earl Rivers, who, at that period, were restorers and patrons of learning in our own country, and who contributed to its advancement, in imitation of their contemporary, Pius the Second in Italy, both by their munificence and example.

The literary advantages derived from the invention are so obvious, that to point them out with all the formality of disquisition is unnecessary.

But the moralist, no less than the man of letters, finds himself interested in the consequences resulting from the mechanical mode of multiplying the copies of books. To this cause he attributes that change in the manners and sentiments which has taken place within the interval of a century or two, and which cannot escape even superficial observation. Philosophy, once preserved among a chosen few, with the selfishness of an Alexander, who reprimanded Aristotle for divulging the secrets of science, has now diffused its influence on the mean as well as the great, the gay and the fair as well as the severe and studious, the merchant and the manufacturer as well as the contemplative professor. Pamphlets and manuals, on every subject of human inquiry, are circulated by the assiduous trader at a small price among the lowest ranks of the com-

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munity, the greatest part of whom have been furnished with the ability of reading by an eleemosynary education. A tincture of letters, which was once rare, and formed a shining character, has pervaded the mass of the people, and in a free country like our own, where it is not checked in its operation by political restraints, has produced remarkable effects on the general system of morality. Much good has resulted from it; happy, if it had not been mixed with the characteristic alloy of human happiness, much evil. Learning thus communicated to the vulgar, has taught the savage ferocity of gross ignorance to yield to gentleness and humanity; but it has also superinduced a general indolence, refinement, and false delicacy. It has been the means of exhibiting, to the best advantage, the image of virtue in her natural beauty; but it has also held up to view the meretricious charms of vice in the false ornaments superadded by a corrupt imagination. It has been a steady light to lighten men in the path of truth; but it has also been a meteor leading them into the mazes of error, and plunging them at last into the depths of misery. If it has often tempted us to boast of living in an enlightened age, it has no less frequently induced us to regret the old times of ignorant but innocent simplicity. If we sometimes look back with a mixture of scorn and pity on the unlettered ages that preceded us; we also sometimes confess ourselves ready to renounce the pride of superior knowledge for the solid happiness of that national probity, which, though it may not have receded, has not kept pace with our progress in scientific improvement. Here, however, the old maxim will be suggested to every one, that a good argument against the use of a thing, cannot be drawn from its abuse. It will, at the same time, be remembered, that the present times are ever seen through the fallacious

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mediums of prejudice and passion; and that the censures of the satirist may not arise from real degeneracy, but that common propensity which has, in all ages, given rise to invectives against the prevailing manners. If it is true, that improvement in knowledge is a natural and laudable object of human desire. the more general that improvement, the happier and more perfect is human nature, and the more estimable that art from which it is principally derived.

But, however equivocal the effects of the universal dissemination of literature on the morals of those who cannot judge and select with the same ease with which they can procure books, there is no doubt of their being beneficial among others, whose judgment is directed by liberal culture, and whose sentiments are undepraved by fashionable dissipation. Before the introducion of printing, the student who revolted at the idea of languishing in the sloth of monkery, had scarcely any scope for his industry and talents, but in the puerile perplexities of a scholastic philosophy, as little adapted to call forth the virtues of the heart, as to promote valuable knowledge: but since that important æra in the annals of learning, every individual, even the poorest of the muses' train, has been enabled to obtain, without difficulty, the works of those great masters in practical and speculative ethics, the Greek and Roman philosophers. He is taught by the same instructors who formed a Xenophon and a Scipio, and can hold converse in the retirements of his chamber, with the celebrated sages of antiquity, with nearly the same advantages as if he actually sat with Socrates beneath the shade of the plane-tree, walked with Plato in the Lyceum, or accompanied Cicero to his Tusculan villa.

Whatever tends to diffuse new light on the understandings of a whole people, or to effect a change in

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the general system of manners, soon produces a similar revolution in their political character. Airy fabrics, which, when seen through the mists of ignorance, were supposed to be realities, vanished at the light of learning, as the enchantment is dissolved by the operation of the talisman. The sun of science arose, the prospect cleared around, and they who had shuddered at the ideal phantoms of the night, ventured to walk forth and examine every object that solicited attention. The prejudices on the subject of civil government, formed by ignorance, and fostered by the policy of power, when once the art of printing had multiplied books, and roused the spirit of inquiry, soon gave way to the dictates of instructed reason. The natural rights of mankind became well understood, the law of nations was attended to, implicit obedience was neither exacted on the one part with the same rigour as before, nor paid on the other with equal servility. What remained of the feudal institutions could not long subsist, when more liberal ideas of the nearer equality of mankind were imbibed from books, and when a great degree of dignity and power was attainable, not only by birth and riches, but by mere literary eminence. The distinction of vassal and lord soon ceased to be the only one in the community, when men were led, by the ease with which books were procured, to aspire after the fine arts, philosophy, and erudition. Such studies infused a noble generosity of spirit, which scorned to pay an abject homage to ignorant opulence. Ignorant opulence, indeed, could not maintain, or even exact by force, that truly valuable respect which is naturally due, and cheerfully paid, to personal dignity. Men, by reading, were led to reflect, and by reflection discovered that they had been under an error when they looked up to their governors as to a superior order of beings; but at the same time they learned

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the happiness of living under a well-regulated constitution, the duty of obedience in return for protection and the political necessity of subordination. History, and treatises of politics, suggested just notions of civil society, and a sense of expediency produced at length that voluntary acquiescence which was once exacted by pretensions to divine right, or by the immediate interposition of authority. The lust of dominion, which disgraced the iron reign of the sullen and unlettered tyrant, was succeeded, in the enlightened father of his people, by a spirit of benevolence and philosophical moderation. That power, which was once placed on the sandy foundation of popular prejudice and fear, when those fears and prejudices were dissipated by free disquisition, acquired an establishment on the basis of reason.

Nor let it be deemed idle speculation to attribute these salutary consequences to the invention of printing, since to him who attentively considers all its remote as well as proximate effects, it will appear fully adequate to their production. When all ranks of people on a sudden were enabled to exert with vigour the faculty of accurate and comprehensive thought, which had only lain dormant for want of opportunity, the effect on the moral and political world must be as striking, as that which takes place in the physical, at the return of day after night, and spring after winter.

Thus has Faustus and Mentz, by an art invented and exercised with views of private emolument, ultimately contributed more to the empires, and caused more important events in their history, than all the efforts of the renowned conquerors and lawgivers of antiquity. That the same art which has produced these salutary consequences, has also been the means of encouraging licentiousness, of animating sedition,

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and kindling the flames of civil war, is to be attributed to that lamentable condition of human affairs which is observed to counterbalance every good with a portion of concomitant evil.

To the art of printing, however, it is acknowledged, we owe the Reformation. It has been justly remarked, that if the books of Luther had been multiplied only by the slow process of the hand writing, they must have been few, and would easily have been suppressed by the combination of wealth and power: but, poured forth in abundance from the press, they spread over the land with the rapidity of an inundation, which acquires additional force from the efforts used to obstruct its progress. He who undertook to prevent the dispersion of the books once issued from the press, attempted a task no less arduous than the destruction of the Hydra. Resistance was vain, and religion was reformed: and we who are chiefly interested in this happy revolution must remember, amidst the praises bestowed on Luther, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, unassisted by the invention of Faustus.

How greatly the cause of religion has been promoted by the art, must appear, when it is considered, that it has placed those sacred books in the hand of every individual, which, besides that they were once locked up in a dead language, could not be procured without great difficulty. The numerous comments on them of every kind, which tend to promote piety, and to form the Christian philosopher, would probably never have been composed, and certainly would not have extended their beneficial influence, if typography had still been unknown. By that art, the light, which is to illuminate a dark world, has been placed in a situation more advantageous to the emission of its rays: but if it has been the means of illustrating the doctrines, and enforcing the practice of religion, it has also, particu-

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larly in the present age, struck at the root of piety and moral virtue, by propagating opinions favourable to the sceptic and the voluptuary. It has enabled modern authors wantonly to gratify their avarice, their vanity, and their misanthrophy, in disseminating novel systems subversive of the dignity and happiness of human nature: but though the perversion of the art is lamentably remarkable in those volumes which issue, with offensive profusion, from the vain, the wicked, and the hungry, yet this good results from the evil, that as truth is great and will prevail, she must derive fresh lustre, by displaying the superiority of her strength in the conflict with sophistry.

Thus the art of printing, in whatever light it is viewed, has deserved respect and attention. From the ingenuity of the contrivance, it has ever excited mechanical curiosity; from its intimate connexion with learning, it has justly claimed historical notice; and from its extensive influence on morality, politics, and religion, it is now become a subject of very important speculation.

But, however we may felicitate mankind on the invention, there are perhaps those who wish that, together with its compatriot art of manufacturing gunpowder, it had not yet been brought to light. Of its effects on literature, they assert, that it has increased the number of books, till they distract, rather than improve the mind; and of its malignant influence on morals, they complain, that it has often introduced a false refinement, incompatible with the simplicity of primitive piety and genuine virtue. With respect to its literary ill consequences, it may be said, that though it produces to the world an infinite number of worthless publications, yet true wit and fine composition will still retain their value, and it will be an easy task for critical discernment to select these from the sur-

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rounding mass of absurdity: and though, with respect to its moral effects, a regard to truth extorts the confession, that it has diffused immorality and irreligion, divulged with cruel impertinence the secrets of private life, and spread the tale of scandal through an empire; yet these are evils which will either shrink away unobserved in the triumphs of time and truth over falsehood, or which may, at any time, be suppressed by legislative interposition.

The liberty of the press is a subject not to be touched upon but with a trembling caution. Every student must abhor the thought of erecting the tribunal of a star-chamber in the republic of letters; every lover of his country must reject with disdain the proposal of silencing the voice of truth by the menace of authority; but, at the same time, every true friend to learning and mankind, who, free from the enthusiasm of party, understands their real interest, would rejoice to see the day when the advantages of the liberty of the press shall be unalloyed with those evils of its licentiousness, which, without some expedient of control, will prevail, as long as there are, on one hand, indigent and avaricious publishers, and, on the other, factious and unprincipled readers.

But innovations in a particular intimately connected with civil liberty, will ever be guarded against in a free country, with all the vigilance of jealous circumspection. Men will often patiently support the present evil, the nature and extent of which is ascertained by experience, rather than incur the hazard of a future detriment, which may possibly outweigh the beneficial ends proposed. If then the unrestrained use of the press is, as it has been commonly termed, the palladium of liberty, may it never be taken from us by fraud or force! and perhaps the evils resulting from the abuse of this privilege are of that kind, which,

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when permitted to take their course, ultimately remedy themselves: for it is certain, that there may be a period, and perhaps our own times approach to it, when the petulant licentiousness of public prints and pamphlets becomes too contemptible to gain attention, and therefore fails of producing a malignant effect. Avarice will cease to publish, when men are too wise to purchase; faction and vanity will be silent, when they no longer find an audience: but penal and coercive measures are known to give weight to the nonsense of sedition, corruption, and impiety, by alarming that attention which it could not otherwise excite, and to occasion the evils intended to be obviated; as the means used to extinguish a flame sometimes increase its violence.

But referring the discussion of this complicated subject to legislative wisdom, we may venture to express an honest wish without danger of presumption, and surely all the good and enlightened part of mankind will sympathize in the desire, that the time will not be distant, when the qualities of the heart shall be cultivated with the same general ardour as the powers of the understanding; when the affectation of singularity, and the love of money, shall no longer multiply treatises tending to teach the people a false philosophy, an erroneous belief, or a factious conduct; when the art of printing shall no more be perverted to embellish vice and justify folly; but operating in the accomplishment of its proper purposes, at once promote the interest, which cannot indeed without natural violence be separate, of sound learning, right reason, and unaffected virtue.

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No. CXXXVII.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

THE good reception that species of poetry, called satire, has commonly met with in the world, is, perhaps, owing to some dispositions in the human nature not the most amiable. It derives not its power of pleasing, like other poetry, from its effects on the imagination. It raises few enchanting prospects; it is not necessarily employed in fiction. A spirit of indignation is its essential principle, and by causing a similar spirit in the reader, it gently gratifies the irascible and malignant passions.

It must be owned, that satire has seldom answered its ostensible end of reforming the age. Yet allowing it to be of little use in reformation, it is often composed with such evident marks of genius as render it interesting to men of taste. And though spleen may have given rise to its first production, and the love of censure ensured its success, yet the beauties of the composition will cause it to be read, even by those who disapprove personal invective, long after the resentment that occasioned it has subsided.

Horace, the politest writer whom the world ever produced, adopted satirical writing, and succeeded in it, though there is every reason to believe that his natural disposition was not severe. The truth is, he was a man of the world, as well as a man of reflection, and wrote his remarks on men and things in familiar verse; not without censuring them indeed, but without indulging the asperity of sarcasm. He probed every wound with so gentle a hand, that the patient smiled under the operation. The gay friend of Mæcenas had lived in courts, and knew too much of the world to think he could reform the voluptuous part of it by abrupt and unqualified severity.

Not so the stern Juvenal. With all the warmth

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of a zealot in the cause of virtue, he pours his majestic verse, and, amid the most spirited invective and the finest morality, emits many a luminous irradiation of poetry beautifully descriptive.

His predecessor Persius had afforded him a noble model. He improved on it in nothing but perspicuity. Persius is all fire, spirit, animation. The frequency of his interrogations rouses the attention of the reader, and it is not easy to read and understand him without catching the glow with which he evidently wrote. If his obscurity rose from fear, it does not indeed depreciate his merit as a writer; but it has caused him to be less read and admired than he deserves. The last lines of his second satire are alone sufficient to entitle him to immortality.

The English seem to have copied the manner of Juvenal rather than of Horace. Our national spirit is indeed of the manly and rougher kind, and feels something congenial with itself in the vehemence of the indignant Juvenal.

The Roman is remarkably harmonious. But Donne, his imitator, seems to have thought roughness of verse, as well as of sentiment, a real grace. It is scarcely possible, that a writer who did not studiously avoid a smooth versification, could have written so many lines without stumbling on a good one. Pope has revived his fame by attuning his harsh numbers; a work whose very excellence makes us regret that a genius so fertile as was the bard's of Twickenham, should have wasted its vigour in paraphrases and translations.

This versatile poet has imbibed the very spirit of Horace. Nor can the mere English reader obtain, by the translations of Creech or of Francis, so clear and adequate an idea of the true Horatian manner, as from the liberal imitations of Pope. Dryden seems to

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have preferred the model of his favourite Juvenal. His nervous line was well adapted to satirical composition. He says himself, "he could write severely, with more ease than he could write gently." His Absalom and Achitophel, and his Mac Flecknoe, are masterpieces and models in the serious and vehement kind of satire.

Boileau seems to have blended with judgment the manner of Horace and Juvenal. Yet, whatever degree of elegance he possesses, the natural monotony of French verse tires an ear accustomed to the various harmony of our English poet. The French language never appears so mean as in the heroic couplet. He who reads the Henriade, and at the same time thinks of Milton, Dryden, Garth, or Pope, must close the volume with all the loathing of disgust. He who reads Boileau, will find his improving imitator, Pope, rise in his opinion. Pope rouses the attention by all the changes of musical modulation; Boileau soothes it to dull repose by the lullaby of similar pauses uniformly repeated.

A poet of our own, little attended to at present, once enjoyed a very high degree of fame as a satirical writer. Oldham has been called the English Juvenal. His satire on the Jesuits has indeed much of the spirit of Juvenal. It displays wit, force, pungency, and a very copious invention; but it is no less distinguished by a vulgarity, which must prevent Oldham from keeping his place among the classics of our country. He has lashed the Jesuits with deserved and unrelenting rigour; but though severe punishment is often necessary, yet to see it inflicted with the wanton cruelty of an assassin, is not agreeable. There are some works of poetry, as well as of painting, which, though well performed as pieces of art, lose the praise their excellence demands, by the shocking nature of their representations.

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A later satirist, Dr. Young, is still read with pleasure. But he has the fault of Seneca, of Ovid, of Cowley, a profuse and unseasonable application of wit. His satires have been justly called a string of epigrams. A lover of originality, he did not regard models. Had he endeavoured to imitate Juvenal or Persius, he would have avoided this fault. Those great masters were too much engrossed by the importance of their subjects to fall into the puerility of witticism. There is also something in Young's versification which a good ear does not approve.

But even Young, popular as he was, has been eclipsed by a poet who has shone with the effulgence and the instability of a meteor. Churchill possessed merit; a merit which was magnified when seen through the medium of party, beyond that degree which it was able to support. When reason at last viewed what passion had exaggerated, she was disgusted with the disappointment, and turned away with neglect. Thus the celebrated Churchill, with whose applause the town re-echoed, is sinking to an oblivion which he hardly deserves; for though he wrote many careless lines and many dull passages, yet the greater part of his productions displayed a genuine vein of satirical genius.

Within a few years satire has reassumed her original rude form of scurrilous and petulant abuse. An improved versification has given a gloss to illiberal, calumnious, and anonymous invectives. An undaunted effrontery, recommended by elegant verse, has supplied the want of every classical and noble ornament. That it has been well received is no proof of its solid excellence as composition, since, to the greater part of readers, the abuse which it lavishly pours on public and private characters and contemporaries, is a sufficient recommendation.

It differs from classical satire in this as well as other circumstances. Horace, Persius, Juvenal, though some-

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times shockingly disgraced by obscenity, yet abound with fine moral sentiments. They not only put vice to shame, but countenanced virtue, and pointed out the way to attain it. But the satirists of our times seem to have little else in view than to gratify private pique, or party prejudice. It is indeed scarcely to be expected, that, in a degenerate age, many will be found to possess dignity of character and solidity of judgment, in a degree sufficient to enable them to stand forth disinterested and efficient censors of prevailing folly and fashionable vice. Let it ever be remembered, that spite is not legitimate satire, and that personal or party malice are themselves proper objects of a Juvenal's severest invective.

No. CXXXVIII.

ON LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS.

To false and careless reasoning most of the misfortunes of life are to be attributed. Logic then, as an art, is perhaps so far useful in the conduct of life, as it superinduces a habit of accurate reasoning.

But what says experience? Is the man who has digested Burgersdicius found to be wiser in his actions than others? The best disputant that ever conquered in the schools, when he has descended to the walks of common life, has been found no less prone to deviate into the paths of error, to be involved in the clouds of passion, and misled by the false lights of imagination, than the busy multitude who never heard of the categories.

They who possess common sense in a competent degree, will discover, with no other aid, the fallacy of wrong reasoning. They who are deficient in it, will not find a substitute in the use of a syllogism.

The great numbers who supply civil and commercial offices, in which there is a constant necessity for the

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exertion of reason, and who conduct the most important affairs without the aid of scholastic logic, are proofs that vigorous nature wants not this slender assistance. To imagine that a well-formed mind cannot reason well without logic, is no less absurd, than to suppose that the solid oak wants the support of the ivy that creeps around it.

The best school for the improvement of reason, after a competent education, is the living world. We find even the illiterate, who have spent their lives in constant action, possessing a very extensive knowledge of things, and a most accurate method of judging of them; a knowledge and a method which the cultivated but inexperienced reasoner can seldom attain. It is common to see the learned academic, whose labours are at last rewarded by a rural benefice, unable, notwithstanding his acquired strength of reason, to cope with the rude rustic in a bargain for dues which the laws have allotted him.

It seems, then, that the gradual decay of scholastic logic, and the contempt in which syllogistic skill is held, are not unreasonable. It contributes little to the benefit of society. It is rather injurious to it by drawing off that attention which might be usefully bestowed. What then shall we say? Must an art, which our forefathers have studied from age to age, and to which many of us have devoted our first years at the universities, be exploded? A veneration is due to long-established opinions. The powers of judging, which stimulate the present age to innovation, were possessed by the past in equal perfection. They had some reason for their institutions. The same reason may perhaps remain to prevent the total abolition of them; for truth and reason are unchangeable. Our ancestors established logical studies in the universities, because in their days there were few other books to be

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obtained, and no other learning was prized. Their descendants must continue to bestow on them a moderate attention, because every part of knowledge contributes to accomplish the professed scholar. But they need give no more than a moderate attention, because the improvements of philosophy, and the great multiplication of books in every part of human learning, enable the student to spend his time and exercise his sagacity more usefully and more agreeably.

For metaphysics what can be said? If every book that has been written on them, and thousands have been written, were annihilated, not a single individual in the great community of all mankind, would in any one respect have just reason to lament the loss. Mathematical and arithmetical studies are speculative, it is true; but they do not terminate in speculation. They afford a great pleasure, abstractedly considered, by the full evidence with which they display their truths; but they tend to obvious utility as well as to delight. The builder, the navigator, almost every mechanic art is assisted by geometry; and all men, without exception, are benefited by arithmetic. But metaphysics tend only to benight the understanding in a cloud of its own making, and to lose it in a labyrinth of its own contrivance.

Metaphysics were once encouraged and cultivated, because they served the purposes of superstition. They involved theological subjects in a perplexity which the simple could not unravel. They gave an air of mystery and depth, which caught the admiration of the vulgar. They are now employed, in a similar manner, in the service of infidelity. They have induced the half-learned and the conceited, those who think they understand them, and those who wish to be thought by others to understand them, to adopt, without being apprehensive of danger, opinions fatal to their own happiness and to the existence of society.

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Even when cultivated by the honest and truly ingenious, they exhibit an instance of blamable pride. They aim at a science to which man can never attain. It is truly laughable to observe a creature, with hardly knowledge enough of the things around him to guide him with safety, perplexing himself with ontological inquiries into the nature of angels, and the essence of the devil.

The ontologists and pneumatologists, the *nominales* and *reales*, the *doctores seraphici*, and all the tribe of microscopic philosophers, are, in the present age of discernment, totally neglected. Even Malebranche and Locke, the most rational of the metaphyscians, are daily losing ground. As a task, they are attended to in the public seminaries, where some obsolete plan of study requires metaphysical exercises; but the multitude of more agreeable works seldom leaves time or inclination, to the student who is at liberty to choose his books, for the controversy concerning innate ideas. A few, however, in the present times, have been so unfortunate as to waste their labour in defending materialism, in diffusing scepticism, and in proving that man is no more than an animal. This last sentence and this doctrine may probably induce them to prove, in their own instances, that man is an irritable animal. Nothing is more easily provoked than pride of intellect.

To put an end to speculative error, it might, perhaps, in some degree, be effectual to lay less stress upon metaphysics in academical education. Those who preside over our seminaries are no less liberal than enlightened, and will surely, on some future day, if any part of the present system of instruction is trifling or pernicious, renounce it with alacrity. But a proper deference to their respectable opinions renders it reasonable to suppose, that an attention to this abstruse, though otherwise useless science, may tend to give the young mind

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a habit of thinking with depth and precision. As a severe discipline, it may be advantageous. Many a manœuvre is taught the soldier in his course of preparation for war, which will seldom be useful in the field of battle.

All those who have little opportunity of being actively serviceable to others, have an unquestionable right to seek amusement in abstruse speculation, or in any other pastime which is innocent. They may puzzle themselves for diversion even in metaphysics. But if, in the course of their inquiries, they should fall upon a wonderful discovery, which, when divulged, would disturb the happy ignorance of mankind, let them for once be selfish, enjoy it in private, and withhold it from the community.

No. CXXXIX.

ON LATIN VERSE AS AN EXERCISE AT SCHOOLS.

No part of classical education has been more generally censured and more firmly adhered to, than that of exercising boys in the composition of Latin poetry. The trite remark, that a poet is born, and not formed by discipline, has been urged against it. It has also been alleged, that the time bestowed on it would be more advantageously spent in the study of things, and in acquiring a right method of expressing our sentiments in humble prose. It is absurd enough, say the objectors, to exact a certain portion of English verse from the scholar; but to perplex him with Latin verse, at a time when he might be learning a thousand useful things; what is it but extreme imprudence, countenanced indeed by general practice, but nevertheless both culpable and truly ridiculous?

They allow, however, that the custom is general, and of long duration. Surely then that degree of respect is due to the general opinion of mankind, and

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to the wisdom of our predecessors, which leads us to presume, that there must have been some benefit perceived by experience from an institution thus ancient and universal. And it is natural to consider, whether a few arguments may not be found in favour of a mode silently and uniformly pursued, amid the loud clamour every where raised against it.

The defenders of practices unjustly censured, often do an injury to their cause, by admitting none of the objections to be reasonable. We will then allow, that to learn to make Latin verse is to lose time, when the scholar is destined to spend his life in commercial or in mechanical employments. But at the same time, we must insist on its utility to the man of independent fortune, to the divine, the lawyer, the physician, and to every gentlemen who aspires at the character of an accomplished or polite scholar.

To all these, an acquaintance with the classics will add an elegance, such as tends to complete their characters as gentlemen as well as scholars. It is the finishing polish of education, and operates on the mind, like dancing on the person, by superadding a graceful habit. But there is no method so well calculated to infuse an intimate knowledge of an author, as to imitate an endeavour to rival his excellencies. To write Virgilian verse with true elegance, it is necessary to commit to memory every phrase; to catch the very spirit of Virgil; to mark the varied pauses of his verses, the length of his periods, the peculiar grace of his expressions; and to give the whole composition a majestic dignity. All these requisites to poetical composition in Latin, can be acquired only by a frequent and attentive perusal of the noble Mantuan.

The first-fruits of genius produced by the finest writers that adorn our annals, were compositions in Latin verse. Milton, at a boyish age, wrote it with

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great elegance. Cowley excelled in it early. Addison was much celebrated for his juvenile essays in it. Prior began with writing Latin epigrams. All the great men who have been educated at public schools, where it is invariably an exercise, were, during several years, obliged to compose it as a daily task; and though many of them were never distinguished as poets, yet they derived considerable advantages from their attempts in Latin, as will probably appear from the following reflections.

Difficulty is naturally painful; but to overcome it causes a very sensible pleasure, and facilitates future conquests, by adding courage. To write Latin verse, is certainly an arduous task to a young boy; but the authority of his master, and a spirit of emulation, urge him to attempt with alacrity what his own indolence would have led him to neglect. Long practice gives facility. He finds he has overcome what he once thought insurmountable. When any new undertaking offers itself in future with a difficult and forbidding aspect, he is not affrighted; for he recollects that he has already performed that which appeared to him impracticable. The exertion necessary to accomplish what is not easy, has a natural tendency to give the mind fresh vigour.

A subject taken from a classic, a moral sentiment, or an ingenious remark, is given to a boy as a subject of meditation to employ his leisure during the intervals of school. He is taught that there must be an unity in his design; that he must invent a thought, on which he is to display, if he can, good sense and Augustan wit, expressed in the most elegant versification. This tends to give a knowledge of things, at the same time that it renders it necessary to call to his assistance all his classical phraseology. He must revolve many ideas in his mind before this thought occurs. In this

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process he exercises the powers of judgment, of discrimination, of taste. He recollects all his reading, he reviews all he has seen and heard, he searches his books on similar topics, and at once improves what he has obtained, and makes new acquisitions.

He who has been conversant in great schools will have seen copies of verses written as the exercises of an evening, in which were displayed wit, humour, fine language, ingenious turns, harmonious verse, and very shrewd observations on men and things. Such were the Lusus Westmonasterienses; such were many in the Musæ Etonenses; and such are thousands that have never yet been offered to the public view. It is a known truth, that many of the boys who were engaged in these useful sports of a fertile genius, afterwards became distinguished members of the literary or the political republic; and they owed much of that good reception which they met with in the world, to the fame and merit of classical scholarship acquired at their school.

Every liberal scholar desires to extend his views, and to be enabled to derive literary pleasure from all that is capable of affording it. If he has formed no taste for modern Latin poetry, he will be a stranger to many most pleasing productions. But he cannot have a just relish for them, unless he has a knowledge of prosody, and of their various metres; and of these he can seldom have a perfect knowledge, such a knowledge as will enable him to judge of their finer graces, without having composed Latin poetry as an exercise at school.

It is certain, that none of the modern Latinists have equalled Virgil and Horace, and that the classical student can no where find entertainment so unmixed as in their original writings. But the daintiest fare that an Apicius ever invented, ceased to please when con-

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stantly repeated. Nor can he be said to have an undistinguishing taste, or a bad ear, who seeks variety in the warblings of the Virgilian Vida, and the sweet strains of our own Vincent Bourne. There is often a happy union of the beauties that distinguish Ovid, Tibullus, and Martial, in the Carmina Quadragesimalia. Rapin, Vanier, Buchanan, and Browne, seem to have written Latin verse with an ease, which would almost lead to a supposition that Latin was their vernacular language. In miscellaneous publications of our own and other nations, the man of taste will find a multitude of poëmata, which he may read with pleasure, and without danger of corrupting the purity of his style.

Merely as the means of enjoying an elegant and innocent pleasure in greater perfection, of filling up a leisure hour with a classical amusement, the composition of Latin verse may be justly recommended to the affluent and the generous youth, who enjoys, and knows how to value, a liberal education. Others, it must be owned, will be much better employed in learning their pence-table.

No. CXL.

ON THE INSENSIBILITY OF THE MEN TO THE CHARMS OF A FEMALE MIND CULTIVATED WITH POLITE AND SOLID LITERATURE. [IN A LETTER.]

SIR,

I AM the only daughter of a clergyman, who, on the death of my mother, which happened when I was about three years old, concentrated his affections on me, and thought he could not display his love more effectually than in giving me a good education. His house was situated in a solitary village, and he had but little parochial duty, so that there was scarcely any thing to divert his attention from this object. He had

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ever been devoted to letters, and considered learning, next to virtue, as the noblest distinction of human nature.

As soon as I could read, I was initiated in Lilly's Grammar, and, before I was eight years old, could repeat every rule in it with the greatest accuracy. I was taught indeed needle-work, and the usual female accomplishments; but two hours in every day were invariably set apart for my improvement in Latin. I soon perfected myself in the elementary parts, and had read Phædrus and Cornelius Nepos with a strict attention to the grammatical construction of every word and phrase which they contained. From these I was advanced to Virgil and Horace. Under the direction of so good a classic as my father, I soon acquired a taste for their beauties, and not only read them through with great delight, but committed their more beautiful passages to memory.

My father was so well pleased with my proficiency, and with the task of instructing the object of his tenderest love, that he resolved to carry my improvements higher, and to open to my view the spacious fields of Grecian literature. The Greek Grammar I mastered with great ease, and I found a sweetness in the language which amply repaid me for the little difficulties I sometimes encountered. From the Greek Testament I proceeded to the Cyropædia of Xenophon, the Orations of Demosthenes, the Dialogues of Plato, the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and the Odes of Pindar. That I received great improvement from this course, cannot be denied; but the pleasure of it alone was to me a sufficient reward. I was enabled to drink at the fountain-head, while others were obliged to content themselves with the distant and polluted stream. I found that no translations whatever, however accurately they might exhibit the sense of originals, could

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express the beauties of the language. I was possessed of a power of inspecting those volumes, in admiration of which the world has long agreed, but from which my sex has been for the most part unreasonably excluded. It was a noble privilege, and I value myself upon it; but I hope and believe I did not despise those who had not partaken of it.

The French and Italian languages became easy after my acquaintance with the Latin, and my father was of opinion that they are indispensably necessary to the modern scholar. In French I read Rollin, Boileau, Fontenelle, Voiture, Bouhours, Bruyere, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Marmontel; in Italian, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, Guicciardin, and the Cortegiano of Castiglione. All these gave me a degree of pleasure, which I am sure none would be without who are capable of obtaining it.

After having laid a foundation in the languages, which I believe is seldom done with success but at an early age, my father allowed me to feast without control on the productions of my own country. The learning I had acquired enabled me to read them critically. The best writers abound so much in quotations, that I cannot help thinking that they who are unacquainted with the ancient languages, must often be mortified at their inability to unlock the concealed treasure.

All the classical poets, from Shakespeare to Pope, were my study and delight. History, which my father always recommended as peculiarly suited to adorn the female mind, was a favourite pursuit. I took a peculiar pleasure in every biographical anecdote I could collect. After reading a life, or the history of any particular event, I was always desired by my father to give my sentiments upon it in writing; an exercise which I found to be attended with great advantage.

I never penetrated deeply into the sciences, yet I could not rest satisfied without a superficial knowledge

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of astronomy, of the solar system, of experimental philosophy, and of geography, mathematical, physical, and political. This little was necessary for rational conversation, and I had neither time nor taste for scientific refinements. Poetry was my delight, and I sometimes wrote it, as the partiality of my poor father led him to assert, in a pleasing manner.

I do not make it a merit of my own, because it was entirely owing to my father's direction, that with all my attention to books, I paid as much attention to music and dancing as others of my age. My father excelled in music, and he taught me to play on the piano forte. He engaged a good master to instruct me in dancing, and he always cautioned me against that neglect of dress and of accurate neatness, which he said had sometimes involved literary ladies in deserved disgrace. He likewise inculcated the necessity of avoiding a pedantic manner of conversation, and strictly charged me never to be overbearing, or to show in the company of others the least appearance of conscious superiority. I believe I may venture to say, that I strictly complied with his directions, and that I talked with perfect ease among the superficial, and neither expressed nor felt contempt, except where vanity and affectation were combined with ignorance.

Yet, notwithstanding my improvements, and my earnest endeavours to prevent them from becoming invidious, I find myself received in the world with less cordiality than I had reason to expect. My own sex stand too much in awe of me to bear me any affection. When I come into their company, an universal silence would prevail, if it were not interrupted by myself. Though I cannot say that I am treated rudely, yet I can easily perceive that the civilities I receive are constrained; and I have every reason to believe, that no small pains are taken to traduce my character, and to

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ridicule my taste in dress, and all the circumstances of external behaviour. It is kindly hinted, that a little awkwardness and impropriety may be excused in a learned lady, and that dress and decorum are beneath the notice of a poetess and Latin scholar.

I have no reason to think that my person is particularly disagreeable; yet I know not how it is, I am avoided by gentlemen, who are ambitious of the company of other ladies. They have dropt, in the hearing of some of my friends, that though they think me extremely clever, yet they cannot reconcile the ideas of female attractions and the knowledge of the Greek. They do not mean to detract from my praise; but they must own, that I am not the woman after their hearts. They entertain a notion, that a lady of improved understanding will not submit to the less dignified cares of managing a household. She knows how to make verses, says some witty beau, but give me the woman who can make a figure at a rout or an assembly.

I must confess, I ever thought it the most valuable recommendation of a wife to be capable of becoming a conversable companion to her husband. A woman of improved understanding and real sense is more likely to submit to her condition, whatever it may be, than the uneducated or the half-learned; and such a one will always be willing to superintend economy when it becomes her duty; and to take an active part in household management, when the happiness of him she loves, and of herself, depends upon her personal interference.

The education of children in the earlier periods, particularly of daughters, naturally belongs to the mother. Her inclination to improve them, seconded by her ability to take the proper methods, must be attended with the most valuable effects. The world is

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acquainted with the happy consequences of a Cornelia's parental care. But it seems probable, that little nourishment of mind can be imbibed from a mother, whose ideas hardly ever wandered beyond the limits of a dressing-room or an assembly. Neither is there sufficient reason to conclude, that she whose intellectual acquisitions enable her to entertain her husband, and to form the minds of her children, must be incapable or unwilling to superintend the table, and give a personal attention to domestic economy.

That learning belongs not to the female character, and that the female mind is not capable of a degree of improvement equal to that of the other sex, are narrow and unphilosophical prejudices. The present times exhibit most honourable instances of female learning and genius. The superior advantages of boys' education are, perhaps, the sole reason of their subsequent superiority. Learning is equally attainable, and I think, equally valuable, for the satisfaction arising from it, to a woman as a man. For my own part, I would not lose the little I possess, to avoid all those disagreeable consequences of which I have just now complained. But can it, *ought* it to be a misfortune to possess a cultivated mind? Does it not argue a want of sense and refinement, when men and women despise and avoid those who have devoted their lives to the improvement of their understandings and the correction of their tempers?

No. CXLI.

ON PARENTAL INDULGENCE.

The love of progeny seems to operate as strongly in the brute creation as in the human species, during the helpless age of immaturity. The guidance of instinct, indeed, as it is more decisively determinate, seems to bring up an offspring with less deviation from

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the purposes of nature than the superior faculty of reason. The greater acuteness of reason leads to hesitation, and involves in error, while it is distracted by the variety of objects it assembles for it choice. The bird never injures its young by repletion. The young, indeed, of few animals, when left to the care of the parent, without the interference of man, is found to perish. But it is well known how large a proportion of children die in the metropolis under the age of two years. The cause is in general the neglect of nature for the aids of art, proceeding from a degree of fondness which stimulates the parent to take all the care upon herself, and to leave little to the invisible process of natural energies.

If the child survive by the vigour of its constitution to a puerile age, even then the fondness of the parent, amiable in its origin, but injurious to the object it most wishes to benefit, is found to destroy the very purposes of living, by endeavouring to render life pleasurable to excess, and without vicissitude. If his absence can be so far borne as to permit him to enter at a school, an earnest desire is expressed that he may be indulged in all those luxuries of the table which pollute the pure stream of the infant blood, and, by overloading the organs of intellect, preclude the possibility of solid improvement. He, whose attention should be engrossed by his book, and who should learn to look on every pleasure of the senses as a subordinate pleasure, is often taught, by the over-weening attachment of a parent, to have little other care than to pamper the grossest among the animal appetites.

Regularity of diet, and modest decency in all the circumstances of scholastic life, are often represented as the result of a too penurious economy; and the young pupil no sooner returns, in the days of vacation, to his paternal roof, than he is crammed with delicacies,

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to compensate the penance he has undergone at the place of his education.

We can derive but little improvement from the teacher we contemn. Yet how can the boy avoid contempt for the master, whom he is taught to consider as capable of depriving the child committed to his care of his proper sustenance? But they who are sensible in other respects, are rendered, by their fondness, weak enough to believe any calumny which a forward child utters for the sake of changing his place of education, or of remaining at home.

The propensity to indulgence is so strong, that at the maturest age, and with the most improved reason, it is difficult to restrain it within the limits of moderation. To encourage, instead of checking, this natural tendency, is, in effect, to nurse those vices of the future youth, and to cause those excesses of early manhood, which, in the end, hasten the grey hairs of the inconsiderate parent with sorrow to the grave. Few would be profligate in the extreme, if they were not untaught all the virtue they learn under their tutors, by the example and inadvertence of their own family. When immorality is obliquely recommended by a father's practice, the infection is irresistible. A tutor's admonitions are soon supposed to proceed merely from official care, when they contradict the conduct of him whom a child naturally loves, and ought to revere, above all others.

The general custom of allowing a very large weekly stipend, and of giving pecuniary presents to the schoolboy, often frustrates the intentions of education. It is not likely that he should give his thoughts to literary improvement, who is obliged to study how he shall spend the bounty of his aunts and cousins; and whose pocket always enables him to find recreation without seeking it in books. It would be happy if things

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could be contrived, that, for want of employment, he should be driven to those volumes where employment of the pleasantest kind may be always found, attended with the most valuable advantages. A profusion of money at a childish age is not uncommonly the cause of subsequent extravagance, and tends to introduce one of the most pernicious and least curable vices, a propensity to gaming. But reasoning can avail little against the partiality of some fond relation, who cannot suffer present pleasure to be neglected by her favourite, for the sake of an advantage which is distant and uncertain.

It is usually supposed that maternal affection is stronger than paternal. There is no doubt but that it often interposes in adjusting the plan of education. Its kind solicitude is too amiable to be censured with asperity. Yet we must assert, that it is not possible that a mother, though sensible and accomplished, should be so well qualified to direct the care of a boy's education in all its parts, as a father of equal abilities. All the important departments in civil life are filled by men. The pulpit, the bar, the senate-house, are appropriated to men. Men, from the facility with which they travel, and their superior hardiness, see more of the world than women, who, with the same opportunities, might indeed make the same observations; but who, in the present state of things, cannot judge of those qualifications, attainments, manners, and characters, which recommend to notice in all the professions of life, and tend to ensure success in education as well as in the paths of ambition. Hence it is that they are observed to set the highest value on ornamental accomplishments, of the grace of which their fine taste is peculiarly sensible; and to under-rate the more solid attainments, with the utility and beauty of which their situation often keeps them unacquainted.

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Many a fond and sensible mother has controverted the necessity of learning Latin, as a dead language, in which there can be no use, while the living languages of France and Italy are more easily attainable, and infinitely more fashionable. Such a judgment is not to be wondered at; nor does it proceed from natural weakness, but from an unavoidable ignorance of the beauties of the classics, and utility of Latin in the practice of every liberal art, in the conversation of the enlightened, and in the study of the most admired modern books, which abound in Latin quotations, in allusions to the ancients, and in words which cannot be fully comprehended without understanding the language from which they are derived.

Add to this, that the extreme tenderness of maternal affection will not permit that strict discipline to be exercised on a beloved son, which, though it has nothing in it of harsh severity, resembles not the soft and indulgent treatment of the mother or nurse. Scarcely any thing of value is brought to perfection without some care analogous to this scholastic discipline. The tree will not produce its fruits in sufficient abundance, or with a proper flavour, unless it is chastised in its luxuriances by the hand of art. It is requisite that the stubborn soil should be broken by cultivation. The most serviceable animals are either useless or hurtful, till reduced to obedience by coercion. Man, above all, possessed as he is of stronger powers and acuter perceptions, of ill qualities, no less than good, in a superior degree, requires all the aids of art to correct his enormities, and teach him to act a rational and consistent part in the theatre of the world. Although the infliction of salutary discipline may give pain even to those who know it to be salutary, yet they must not, for the sake of sparing their own feelings, act in contradiction to their judgment, and do an irreparable

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injury to those whom they most tenderly love. Excessive lenity and indulgence are ultimately excessive rigour.

With the excellent effects of Spartan discipline every one is acquainted. Of the lamentable consequences of modern relaxation, daily experience furnishes examples. The puerile age is patient and tractable. Reformation must begin there. Temperance, diligence, modesty, and humility, cannot be too early inculcated. These will lead through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour and happiness. In this progress, strict discipline will sometimes be necessary; but let not the pretence of proper correction give an opportunity for the gratification of vindictive cruelty. Inhumanity, even in a Busby, admits not of palliation.

No. CXLII.

ON THE POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY.

There are many truths which we firmly believe, though we are unable to refute every argument which the extreme subtilty of learning and ingenuity may advance to invalidate them. When I read the researches of those antiquaries who have endeavoured to prove, that the poems attributed to Rowley were really written by him, I observe many ingenious remarks in confirmation of their opinion, which it would be tedious, if not difficult, to controvert. But I no sooner turn to the poems, than the labour of the antiquaries appears only a waste of time and labour, and I am involuntarily forced to join in placing that laurel, which he seems so well to have deserved, on the brow of Chatterton.

The poems, called the Poems of Rowley, bear so many marks of superior genius, that they have deservedly excited the general attention of polite scholars, and are considered as the most remarkable pro-

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ductions in modern poetry. We have many instances of poetical eminence at an early age; but neither Cowley, Milton, nor Pope, ever produced any thing, while they were boys, which can justly be compared to the poems of Chatterton. The learned antiquaries do not indeed dispute their excellence. They extol it in the highest terms of applause. They raise their favourite Rowley to a rivalry with Homer; but they make the very merit of the works an argument against the real author. Is it possible, say they, that a boy could produce compositions so beautiful and so masterly? That a common boy should produce them is not possible; but that they should be produced by a boy of an extraordinary genius, such a genius as was that of Homer and Shakespeare; such a genius as appears not above once in many centuries; though a prodigy, is such a one as by no means exceeds the bounds of rational credibility.

That Chatterton was such a genius, his manners and his life in some degree evince. He had all the tremulous sensibility of genius, all its eccentricities, all its pride, and all its spirit. Even his death, unfortunate and deplorable as it was, displayed a haughtiness of soul, which urged him to spurn a world where even his exalted genius could not vindicate him from contempt, indigence, and contumely.

Against the opinion of his superiority of genius, the miscellanies which he published in a periodical pamphlet are triumphantly produced. But what proof is there that all which are attributed to him are really his own? They are collected after his death; collected, I suppose, by conjecture, and published in a separate volume, with all the typographical errata of the hasty pamphlets from which they are reprinted. But in many of the pieces which were confessedly written by him, there are marks of genius not indeed

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equal to those of the counterfeit Rowley, but such as prove, that the boy who wrote them could write better. In composing the ancient poems all his attention had been exerted. It was the first, and seems to have been the greatest, object of his life, to raise himself to future eminence by the instrumentality of a fictitious poet of a former age. Nights, if not days, were devoted to the work; for we have it on record, that he used to sit awake in his chamber during the silence of midnight. But the little compositions which he wrote for the magazines, were either written in a careless mood, when he relaxed his mind from his grand work, or in a moment of distress, when an extemporary essay, or copy of verses, was necessary to procure him a halfpenny roll and a draught of small beer. When he found that the editors were more desirous of quantity than quality, and, amidst the numerous volunteers in their service, seemed backward to engage with one who wanted a stipend, he foresaw that even the little which nature required would not be supplied.—He saw and resigned his indignant spirit.

Unfortunate boy! short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal. Hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius——

Unfortunate boy! poorly wast thou accommodated during thy short sojourning among us;—rudely wast thou treated,—sorely did thy feeling soul suffer from the scorn of the unworthy; and there are, at last, those who wish to rob thee of thy only meed, thy posthumous glory. Severe too are the censurers of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts, which none can defend, and which neither thy youth, nor thy fiery spirit, nor thy situation, can excuse. But let thy more rigid censors reflect, that thou wast literally and strictly but a boy. Let many

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of thy bitterest enemies reflect what were their own religious principles, and whether they had any, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Surely it is a severe and unjust surmise, that thou wouldst probably have ended thy life as a victim of the laws, if thou hadst not finished it as thou didst; since the very act by which thou durst put an end to thy painful existence, proves, that thou thoughtest it better to die, than to support life by theft or violence.

The speculative errors of a boy who wrote from the sudden suggestions of passion or despondency, who is not convicted of any immoral or dishonest act in consequence of his speculations, ought to be consigned to oblivion. But there seems to be a general and inveterate dislike to the boy, exclusively of the poet; a dislike which many will be ready to impute, and, indeed, not without the appearance of reason, to that insolence and envy of the little great, which cannot bear to acknowledge so transcendent and commanding a superiority in the humble child of want and obscurity.

Malice, if there was any, may surely now be at rest; for, "Cold he lies in the grave below." But where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when, stung with disappointment, distressed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human misery painted on his fine imagination, poor Chatterton sunk in despair? Alas! ye knew him not then, and now it is too late,—

> For now he is dead;
> Gone to his death-bed,
> All under the willow tree.

So sang the hapless youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart.*

In return for the pleasure I have received from thy

* Some part of the above essay has been inscribed on the monument erected to Chatterton, without any acknowledgment of the plagiarism.

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poems, I pay thee, poor boy, the trifling tribute of my praise. Thyself thou hast emblazoned; thine own monument thou hast erected. But they whom thou hast delighted, feel a pleasure in vindicating thine honours from the rude attacks of detraction. Thy sentiments, thy verse, thy rhythm, all are modern, all are thine. By the help of glossaries and dictionaries, and the perusal of many old English writers, thou hast been able to translate the language of the present time into that of former centuries. Thou has built an artificial ruin. The stones are mossy and old, the whole fabric appears really antique to the distant and the careless spectator; even the connoisseur, who pores with spectacles on the single stones, and inspects the mossy concretions with an antiquarian eye, boldly authenticates its antiquity; but they who examine without prejudice, and by the criterion of common sense, clearly discover the cement and the workmanship of a modern mason.

But though I cannot entertain a doubt but that the poems were written by Chatterton, yet I mean not to dictate to others, nor will I engage in controversy. I have expressed my feelings as those of a reader, who, though he respects the study of antiquities, dislikes the blind prejudices of the mere antiquary. I leave the weapons of controversy to be wielded by those powerful champions in the cause of Chatterton, a Tyrwhitt, and a Warton. I give a single vote for Chatterton; but I can make no interest in his favour.

No. CXLIII.

ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF THE WRITINGS OF STERNE.

It is the privilege of genius, to gild, like the sun, every object on which it emits its lustre. If the influence of its light and heat be directed on deformity itself, something of an agreeable tinge is communi-

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cated; and that which naturally excites horror and aversion, begins at last to please. Genius, like the fabulous power of a Midas, seems to convert all it touches to gold, and, with the wonderful property of the philosopher's stone, to transmute the basest to the purest metal. Hence it has happened, that doctrines which common sense and common prudence have repudiated, are no sooner recommended by writers of genius, than they are received without debate, and admired as the ultimate discoveries of improved philosophy. Let the same opinions be advanced by a dull writer, and even the vain and the vicious, whom they tend to encourage, will refute and disavow them, from principles of pride and of shame.

That Sterne possessed a fine particle of real genius, if our reason were disposed to deny it, our sensations on perusing him fully evince. It is, I think, an infallible proof of real genius, when a writer possesses the power of shaking the nerves, or of affecting the mind in the most lively manner, in a few words, and with the most perfect simplicity of language. Such a power conspicuously marks both a Shakespeare and a Sterne; though Sterne undoubtedly is far below Shakespeare in the scale of genius.

I am ready to allow to Sterne another and a most exalted merit, besides and above the praise of genius. There never was a heathen philosopher, of any age or nation, who has recommended in so affecting a manner the benignant doctrines of a general philanthropy. He has corrected the acrimony of the heart, smoothed the asperities of natural temper, and taught the milk of human kindness to flow all-cheerily (it is his own expression) in gentle and uninterrupted channels.

To have effected so amiable a purpose is a great praise, a distinguished honour. I lament that the praise is lessened and the honour sullied by many

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faults and many follies, which render the writings of Sterne justly and greatly reprehensible.

If we consider them as compositions, and are guided in our judgment by the dictates of sound criticism, and by those standards of excellence, the rectitude of which has been decided by the testimony of the politest ages, it will be necessary to pronounce on them a severe sentence. The great critic of antiquity required, as the necessary constituents of a legitimate composition, a beginning, a middle, and an end. I believe it will be difficult to find them in the chaotic confusion of Tristram Shandy. But, disregarding the tribunal of Aristotle, to which the modern pretenders to genius do not consider themselves as amenable, it will still be true, even by the decisions of reason and common sense, that his writings abound with faults.

Obscurity has always been deemed one of the greatest errors of which a writer can be guilty; and there have been few readers, except those who thought that the acknowledgment would derogate from their reputation for wisdom, who have not complained that Tristram Shandy is in many places disgustfully obscure.

The admirers of Sterne extol his wit. But I believe it will be found that his wit is of the lowest kind, and the easiest of invention; for is it not for the most part allusive obscenity? a species of wit to be found in its fullest perfection in the vulgarist and vilest haunts of vice? It is, indeed, easy to attract the notice and admiration of the youthful and the wanton, by exhibiting loose images under a transparent veil. It is true, indeed, there is usually a veil, and the decent are therefore tempted to read; but the veil, like the affected modesty of a courtezan, serves only as an artifice to facilitate corruption.

The praise of humour has been lavished on Sterne

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with peculiar bounty. If quaintness is humour, the praise is all his own, and let Cervantes and Fielding bow their heads to Sterne. They who admire Uncle Toby, Doctor Slop, and Corporal Trim, as natural characters, or as exhibiting true humour in their manners and conversations, are little acquainted with nature, and have no just taste for genuine humour. Where are the archetypes in real life? It is evident enough that the author meant to be humorous, and many of his readers, in the abundance of their good-nature, have taken the will for the deed.

But till obscurity, till obscenity, till quaintness, till impudence, till oddity, and mere wantonness, wildness, and extravagance, are perfections in writing, Tristram Shandy cannot justly claim the rank to which it has been raised by folly and fashion, by caprice, libertinism, and ignorance. I know that this censure will be considered as blasphemy by the idolaters of Sterne; but I hope it will not sour that milk of human kindness which they have imbibed from his writings: and to an excessive degree of which many soft and effeminate persons affectedly pretend. Let their philanthropy repress awhile their resentment, and I will venture to predict, that time will insensibly strip the writer of those honours which never justly belonged to him.

But will you allow his sermons no merit? I allow some of them the merit of the pathetic; but the laborious attempts to be witty and humorous have spoiled the greater part of them. The appearance of sincerity is one of the best beauties of a sermon. But Sterne seems as if he were laughing at his audience, as if he had ascended the pulpit in a frolic, and preached in mockery. Had he, however, written nothing but his sermons, he certainly would not have been censured as the destroyer of the morals and the happiness of private life.

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There are, indeed, exquisite touches of the pathetic interspersed throughout all his works. His pathetic stories are justly admired. The pathetic was the chief excellence of his writings; his admirers will be displeased if one were to add, that it is the only one which admits of unalloyed applause. It is certainly this which chiefly adorns the Sentimental Journey; a work which, whatever are its merits, has had a pernicious influence on the virtue, and consequently on the happiness, of public and private society.

That softness, that affected and excessive sympathy at first sight, that sentimental affection, which is but lust in disguise, and which is so strongly inspired by the Sentimental Journey and by Tristram Shandy, have been the ruin of thousands of our countrymen and countrywomen, who fancied that, while they were breaking the laws of God and man, they were actuated by the fine feelings of sentimental affection. How much are divorces multiplied since Sterne appeared!

Sterne himself, with all his pretensions, is said to have displayed in private life, an ill-temper and a hard heart; and I shall not hesitate to pronounce him, though many admire him as the first of philosophers, the grand promoter of adultery and every species of illicit commerce.

No. CXLIV.

ON THE WEIGHT AND EFFICACY WHICH MORALITY MAY DERIVE FROM THE INFLUENCE AND EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT.

It is true, indeed, that the world abounds with moral instruction, and that there is scarcely any good thing so easily obtained as good advice; but it is no less true, that moral instruction and good advice are found to possess a very small degree of influence in the busy walks of active life. In the church, we hear the Scriptures read and sermons preached; in the library,

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we study and admire the morality of the philosophers; but how few, in the actual pursuits of ambition, of interest, of pleasure, and even in the common occupations and intercourse of ordinary life, suffer their conduct to be regulated by the precepts of a Solomon, of a Socrates, or of Him who was greater than either!

No sentence is triter, than that example is more powerful than precept; but when the example is set by the rich and the great, its influence on the herd of mankind becomes irresistible. What can books effect? what avail the gentle admonitions of the retired moralist, against the examples of lords, dukes, and East-India nabobs? Can the still, small voice of conscience be heard by those who live in the noise and tumult of pleasurable pursuits? or can the mild doctrines of the humble Jesus be attended to, amid the agitations of the gaming-table, and the debaucheries of a brothel? A vicious nobleman, or profligate man of fashion, contributes more to extirpate morality, and diminish the little portion of happiness which is allowed to mankind, than all the malignant writings of the sceptics, from Mandeville and Bolingbroke, down to the feeble, yet conceited writer, who insinuates his corrupt and infidel opinions under the fair semblance of an elegant history. I cannot help observing, when I think of this last and recent attempt, that it resembles that of the evil spirit, who, when he beguiled the mother of mankind, and ruined all her progeny, used the soft words of an affected eloquence. The serpent was however cursed; but the wily historian is invited to a court, rewarded with places of honour and advantage, and eagerly enrolled in the legislative body of a mighty and a Christian nation.

It is certainly true, that whenever a government bestows peculiar honour on men who have written against the religion of the country, and who have

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impiously fought against the King of kings, it must lose the respect and attachment of all good men. The religion of a country is unquestionably worthy of more solicitude in its preservation than the political constitution, however excellent and admirable. Courts and politics, with all their pageantry and airs of importance, are trifles compared to that system of religion, on which depends the temporal and eternal welfare of every individual throughout the empire. What avails it, that victories are gained, if the prevailing principles and manners destroy our sweetest hopes; those which rely on the protection of a kind Providence, and those which cheer us in this vale of misery, by the bright gleams of a sun which will rise to set no more?

But supposing the narrow-minded rulers of a country so involved in gaming, sensuality, and temporal concerns, as to view all religion as imposture and all modes of faith as political contrivances; yet surely they act inconsistently with the dictates of their own mean and low species of wisdom, when they extirpate, by their example, that religion which they allow to be politically useful. What must the common people think, when notoriously profligate men are advanced to the head of a profession? They cannot but believe, that those who are reputed to be so much wiser than themselves, and who are evidently greater, in a worldly sense of the epithet, must have chosen that system of opinions, and that plan of conduct, which are most likely to be just and rational, safe and pleasant. "If my lord, or his grace," says the mechanic, "of whose wisdom listening senates stand in awe, is a debauchee and an infidel, I must conclude that my parish preacher, an obscure and homely man, is a hypocrite, religion a farce, morality a useless restraint on the liberty of nature. Welcome, then, universal libertinism! and let us hasten to the house of the harlot; let us drink the

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sweet cup of intoxication; let us scorn the creeping manners of vulgar industry, and, like men of spirit, seek our fortunes with a pistol on the highway."

We will suppose the case of a great officer of state, but of an abandoned character, residing at a great house in a populous street of the metropolis. His conspicuous station draws the eyes of all the neighbours on every part of his private as well as public conduct. His neighbours, we will proceed to suppose, are honest men, bred in what he calls the prejudices, but which they really believed the virtues, of their forefathers. They are faithful husbands, they are constant churchmen. They are temperate and economical. They are industrious in their occupations, and just in the payment of their debts. But the great man produces in them a total metamorphosis. He lives in a state of fashionable separation from his wife, whom he treated cruelly and wickedly. He keeps a mistress. His house is a constant scene of intemperate festivity. His Sundays are, in a peculiar manner, devoted to jollity, gaming, and debauchery. He would as soon think of going to heaven as to church; and as to paying debts, it is quite unfashionable, and he has genteeler methods of expending his money than on the low tradesmen who supply him with nothing else but necessaries. Who, that has any pretension to fashion, could bear to neglect a horse-race and the gaming-table, merely to satisfy the greasy inhabitants of Clare-market? Such is sometimes the effect of example in a great neighbour, abounding with riches and covered with honours.

Now I ask, whether the restraints of a common education or of common principles, whether the maxims of books or the admonitions of preachers, can counterbalance the weight of such an example, rendered brilliant by opulence and grandeur, and still farther re-

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commended by the patronage of a government, and the authority of office? Vice and misery are communicated from him, first to his neighbourhood, and then to the public at large, like infectious and fatal diseases from the foul contagion of a putrid carcass.

But if a court, a ministry, a parliament, were to honour and reward those only, or chiefly, whose characters were unimpeached, and to brand with infamy, or at least to neglect, the abandoned libertine and the audacious blasphemer, however celebrated for eloquence and abilities, then would morals and religion flourish, then would the empire be fixed on a basis of adamant: then would faction and rebellion be no more; and the rulers of this world would deserve to be honoured with a title to which they have usually but little claim, that of the Representatives of the Beneficent and Almighty God.

No. CXLV.

ON THE PROFLIGACY AND CONSEQUENT MISERY OF THE LOWER CLASSES, AND ON THE MEANS OF PREVENTION.

A CONTEMPLATIVE and benevolent man can scarcely look down for a moment on the lowest walks of life without feeling his compassion powerfully excited. On whatever side he turns, he beholds human nature sadly degraded, and sinking into the most deplorable ignorance, profligacy, and misery. Ye philosophers, who exert your ingenuity to explode the little morality and religion that remain among us, leave your closets a while, and survey mankind as they are found in the purlieus of a great metropolis, in the haunts of old Drury, of St. Giles's, of Duke's Place, of Hockley in the Hole, of the brothel, of the prison-house; and then say, whether your hearts do not smite you on the recollection, that you have exercised those talents which God Almighty gave you for benignant purposes;

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in weakening the supports of honesty and all virtue! Let him who coolly controverts the distinction between moral good and evil, and who, instigated by vice and vanity, boldly fights against the religion of Jesus, and the comfortable doctrines of grace and redemption, repair to the cells of the convict, to the condemned hole, and spend the midnight hour with the murderer who is doomed to fall a victim on the morrow to the justice of his country. Ah! little think the conceited sophists, who sit calmly at their desks, and teach men to laugh at all that is serious and sacred, to what an abyss of misery the ACTUAL PRACTICE of their speculative opinions will reduce the poor lost child of fallen Adam! If they thought on this, and possessed hearts capable of feeling, they would shudder at the tendency of their writings, and henceforth employ their abilities in restoring human nature to happiness and dignity.

The evils arising from the poverty of the lower ranks are trifling, when compared with those occasioned by their depravity. There is, indeed, no real and substantial happiness, of which poverty, when accompanied with health and innocence, is not capable; but, wallowing in vice, involved in the perplexities of fraud, haunted by the fears of detection, and distressed and tormented with the disease of intemperance, it becomes such a state of wretchedness and wickedness as can only be exceeded in the regions of infernal torture. And can the rulers of this world possess a plenitude of power without attempting to exert it in its fullest force in the prevention, or at least the mitigation, of extreme misery among the lowest, the most numerous, and perhaps the most useful members of the community? I have no esteem for that species of politics which pretends to pursue a national good independently of the happiness of individuals; and I cannot help thinking, a system of government, which derives

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any part of its wealth from the wretchedness of the greater part of its subjects, not only defective but diabolical. To encourage intoxication for the sake of increasing a revenue, though it may be natural in a confederacy of sharpers, is an idea so mean, so base, so cruel, that the statesman who entertains it, however loaded with civil honours, and renowned for his wisdom, deserves to be stigmatized with immortal infamy. That the vices and miseries of the lower classes chiefly arise from the multiplication of houses of public entertainment, is a truth which none have ever controverted. And perhaps no effectual and permanent remedy can be applied, without the interposition of the legislature, in lessening the number of public-houses, and in exacting a strict scrutiny into the characters of those to whom licences are allowed.

But, in the present constitution of affairs, it is greatly to be feared, that the desire of raising a large revenue will usually supersede all moral considerations. What, indeed, is the moralist to the financier? The greatness of empire, like that of private life, is for the most part estimated by riches, exclusively of private virtue and of intellectual excellence. If then we vainly appeal to the legislature, we must seek, in other resources, for the alleviation of a disease which perhaps the legislature alone can radically cure.

Now it is certain, that much of the profligacy of the plebeian order arises from extreme ignorance. All men pursue with ardour the possession of some good, real or imaginary. What is it which must constitute this good, and appear superior to all other objects, in the mind of a wretch born in a cellar or a garret of Kent-street, or Broad St. Giles's, almost starved with cold and hunger during his infancy, beaten, reviled, abused, neglected while a boy, and conducted to manhood amidst the most shocking examples of cruelty

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and fraud, of drunkenness and debauchery? Is it probable that, for the most part, he should have an idea of any other good but the possession of money, and the indulgence of the grossest sensuality? Can he have any principles or habits of virtue to restrain him from secret fraud and open violence? His understanding is no less rude and uncultivated than that of the savage, and becomes at last incapable of admitting any instruction but in the low tricks of a thief, and the artifices of a prostitute. The world exists not to him, but as it appears amidst the vilest, the most degenerate, and the most ignorant of the human race. He pursues a *summum bonum*, or a chief good, which to him appears to consist in seizing the property of the incautious, and in using his gains as the instrument of brutal indulgence. Poor unfortunate brother! for a brother we must acknowledge thee, deformed as thou art with rags, and loathsome to the eye of delicacy—Hapless boy! if thou hadst known purer pleasures and better objects, thou wouldst probably have sought them with the same eagerness which has brought thee to the gibbet. The dignified statesman, the venerable bishop, the authoritative judge who tries and who condemns thee to die, might probably have done as thou hast done, and suffered as thou sufferest, had he been born as thou wast born, the child of misery, the outcast of society; friendless, homeless, unbeloved, unregarded, unknown, and unknowing of the means and motives of an honest industry. Thou fallest a victim to the laws indeed, and perhaps a just victim; but I will pity thee, my heart shall bleed for thee, and venture still to predict, that the sweet mercy of Heaven, in consideration of thy sufferings and temptations on earth, will mitigate the severity of human justice.

He who can enjoy the pleasures of affluence without

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considering the misery of the lower classes, and endeavouring, according to his influence and abilities, to alleviate the burden, probably possesses a disposition which no riches can render happy. Charity is characteristic of this country, and is, indeed, the natural effect of British generosity. Our clergy are constantly recommending it in the metropolis; and the many palaces of the poor, which lift up their roofs around it, are eminent and honourable testimonies, that their preaching is not in vain when they recommend munificence. There are, however, few charitable establishments that so immediately tend to snatch the lowest classes from wretchedness and ruin, as that of the Marine Society; and if my praise could contribute to effect it, the fame of its institutors should be immortal. But their own benevolent hearts, and that God in whose gracious purposes they co-operate, are able to bestow on them a reward infinitely superior to all human glory.

They who inform the understandings of the poor, in such a manner and degree as to amend their morals, contribute more to their happiness than the most munificent among their pecuniary benefactors. In a great and commercial nation honest industry will seldom be destitute of employment and reward. And here I cannot help remarking the singular utility and importance of the clergy. The church-doors are open to all; and valuable instruction in every duty of human life is afforded gratuitously. Our Saviour, who knew and felt for the wretchedness of the lower classes, seems to have designed the Gospel, in a peculiar manner, for the poor; and the poor of this country have the Gospel preached to them, if they are willing to listen to it, in every part of the kingdom. But it is a melancholy truth, that the poor in general, but especially those of the metropolis, neglect to avail themselves of this singular and unspeakable advantage.

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Those among them who give any attention to religion, are often led to a state approaching to lunacy, by illiterate and fanatical pretenders to heavenly illumination.

I venture to affirm, then, that more weight and authority should be given to the regular clergy, whether dissenters or on the establishment. I mean not to erect a spiritual tyranny, for I abhor all tyranny; but I wish that some mode should be devised for rendering the regular clergy more respectable than they now are in the eyes of the vulgar. And I should imagine the most effectual method of accomplishing this purpose is to reward those who are eminently distinguished in the great city for piety and for their parochial labours, with those preferments, and with those honours, which, in the eye of reason and of God, are justly their due.

But, after all that the clergy can effect, even when abuses are removed, it is to be feared that the lower classes will be led by the examples of the higher. But, ye who call yourselves the great, condescend once in your lives to visit a gaol, and to survey the mansions of woe and wickedness in the outskirts of the town! I apply not to your purses: ye are liberal in subscribing to all kinds of charitable institutions. Ye do well. But give me leave to tell you, that the setting of a good example to the lower classes, considered merely as an act of charity, will do more good and prevent more misery, than if ye cut down your last oak, to found an hospital or establish a dispensary.

No. CXLVI.

ON SOME PASSAGES IN ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC: WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON HIS STYLE, GENIUS, AND WORKS.

Aristotle established an intellectual empire, more glorious and universal than the conquests of his pupil

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on this terrestrial globe. But he is a remarkable instance of the caprice of human judgment, and the revolutions of taste. After having been idolized with a veneration almost blasphemous, he is now most undeservedly neglected. And yet his works, though unentertaining and obscure to the reader who peruses them with the same attention which he gives to a novel and a newspaper, abound with matter which cannot fail to enrich the mind, and to delight a philosophical taste by its beautiful truth and accuracy. In his three books on the rhetorical art, are many passages, which describe human nature in the most curious manner, and with the greatest fidelity of delineation. He characterizes the peculiarities of different ages in the life of man, no less scientifically than a Hunter would describe an anatomical subject, or a Linnæus a plant. The fine pictures of the manners of young and old men in the second book, are such as Horace has imitated but not equalled; such as might have richly fertilized the imagination of a Shakespeare. The celebrated speech of Jaques, is not equal to the accurate and complete descriptions of the different characters which mark the progressive stages of human existence as portrayed by the neglected Aristotle.

The close, yet comprehensive language of Aristotle, will sarcely admit of a literal translation. I shall not then attempt to deliver his sentiments in English, since I should not satisfy myself; but I will refer the young student to the admirable original, where, in the fourteenth, and a few subsequent chapters of the second book of Rhetoric, he will be able to acquire a very accurate knowledge of human nature.

I have pointed out these passages as a specimen of Aristotle, with an intention to obviate the prepossessions of those who imagine that every part of his works is abstruse and difficult of comprehension. A good

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translation would be the best commentary that could be given on them: but few men are equal to the task of translating Aristotle. We certainly have no translations of him in our language, but such as add to his obscurity, misrepresent him greatly, and bring his name into disgrace.

I cannot help remarking, that though this is an age in which many ingenious authors delight in metaphysical researches, yet few attend to the writings of Aristotle. Indeed many of the modern philosophers, who have done all they can to obscure the light of nature, common sense, and revelation, by the clouds of metaphysics, have not been sufficiently acquainted with Greek, or with ancient learning, to be able to improve themselves by the fine philosophy of the polished ages of Greece and Rome. Like spiders in a dark and dirty corner, they have drawn flimsy cobwebs from themselves, with which they cruelly endeavour to ensnare the giddy and unwary.

It is indeed my misfortune, if it be a misfortune, to have no great idea of the utility of metaphysical disquisition. And though Aristotle's logic and metaphysics principally contributed, in the middle ages, to render him the idol of the world, I cannot help considering them as the least useful parts of his various lucubrations. They are indeed valuable curiosities, and illustrious monuments of human ingenuity; but at the same time, when compared to his rhetorical, ethical, and political books, they are as the husk and the shell to the pulp and the kernel. It was these, however, together with his erroneous physics, which induced the bigoted theologists to number Aristotle among the saints in the calendar, and to publish a history of his life and death; which concluded with asserting, that Aristotle was the forerunner of Christ in philosophy, as John the Baptist had been in grace.

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Images of him and of the Founder of Christianity were beheld at one time with equal veneration. It is said, that some sects taught their disciples the categories instead of the catechism, and read in the church a section of the ethics instead of a chapter in the Gospel.

If the exclamation which he is related to have made at his death be true, he appears to have possessed very rational ideas on the subject of religion.

A Christian might have said, as it is reported he said just before his dissolution, "In sin and shame was I born, in sorrow have I lived, in trouble I depart; O! thou Cause of causes, have mercy upon me!"—I found this anecdote of Aristotle in the Centuries of Camerarius, but I am not certain of its authenticity.

The style of Aristotle has been censured as harsh and inelegant; but it must be remembered, that few works, of which so much remains, are supposed to have suffered more from the carelessness or presumption of transcribers, and the injuries of long duration, than the works of the great legislator of taste and philosophy. We may fairly attribute any chasms and roughness in the style to some rude hand, or to accident. Strabo, indeed, relates, that the copies of Aristotle's works were greatly injured by damps, as they were buried in the earth a long time after the death of their writer. When they were brought to Rome, and transcribed, they were again injured by the hand of ignorance. It is not credible that so accurate a writer should have neglected those graces of style which the nature of his subjects admitted. The style of his best works is truly pure and Attic; and Quintilian, whose judgment ought to decide, expresses a doubt whether he should pronounce him more illustrious for his knowledge, his copiousness, his acumen, his variety, or the sweetness of his style.

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No. CXLVII.

ON THE BEAUTY AND HAPPINESS OF AN OPEN BEHAVIOUR AND AN INGENUOUS DISPOSITION.*

MANY persons, if they cannot furnish themselves with the courage and generosity of the lion, think themselves equally happy, and much wiser, with the pitiful cunning of the fox. Every word they speak, however trivial the subject, is weighed before it is uttered. A disgustful silence is observed till somebody of authority has advanced an opinion, and then with a civil leer, a doubtful and hesitating assent is given, such as may not preclude the opportunity of a subsequent retractation. If the conversation turn only on the common topics of the weather, the news, the play, the opera, they are no less reserved than if their lives and fortunes depended on the opinion they at last venture, with oracular dignity, to utter. Whatever may be their real idea on the subject, as truth is a trifle compared to the object of pleasing those with whom they converse, they generally contrive gently to agree with you; unless it should appear to them, on mature consideration, that their opinion (if contingencies to the number of at least ten thousand should take place) may, at the distance of half a century, involve them in some small danger of giving a little offence, or of incurring a small embarrassment. They wear a constant smile on their countenance, and are all goodness and benevolence, if you will believe their professions. But beware. A man of this character *niger est*, as Horace says, and thou who justly

* The intention of this, and several other papers, was to counteract the effects of Lord Chesterfield's Letters, which at the time these volumes were written, had almost engrossed the public attention, and were universally studied by the rising generation. I have reason to believe that they have had this salutary consequence.

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claimest the title of an honest Englishman, be upon thy guard when thine ill fortune introduces thee into his company.*

These crafty animals are even more reserved, cautious, timid, and serpentine, in action than in conversation. They lay the deepest schemes, and no conclave of cardinals, no combination of conspirators, no confederacy of thieves, ever deliberated with more impenetrable secrecy. Connexions are sought with the most painful solicitude. No arts and no assiduities are neglected to obtain the favour of the great. Their hearts pant with the utmost anxiety to be introduced to a family of distinction and opulence, not only because the connexion gratifies their pride, but also because, in the wonderful complications and vicissitudes of human affairs, it may one day promote their interest. Before that day arrives, their perpetual uneasiness has often put a period to their ambition, by terminating their existence. But even if they gain their ends, after a youth and a manhood consumed in constant care and servitude, yet the pleasure is not adequate to the pain, nor the advantage to the labour. Every one is ready to complain of the shortness of life; to spend, therefore, the greatest part of it in perpetual fear, caution, suspense, and solicitude, merely to accomplish an object of worldly ambition or avarice; what is it but the proverbial folly of him who loses a pound to save a penny? Give me, O ye powers! an ingenuous man would exclaim, give me health and liberty, with a competence, and I will compassionate the man of a timid and servile soul, who has at last crept on hands and knees, through thick and thin, and seated his trembling limbs, after they have been palsied with care, on some painful eminence.

* Hunc tu, Romane, caveto. Hor.

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Indeed, the perpetual agitation of spirits, the tormenting fears, and the ardent hopes, which alternately disorder the bosom of the subtle and suspicious worldling, are more than a counterbalance to all the riches and titular honours which successful cunning can obtain. What avail crosiers, coronets, fortunes, mansion-houses, parks, and equipages, when the poor pursuer of them has worn out his sensibility, ruined his nerves, lost his eyes, and perhaps stained his honour, and wounded his conscience, in toilsome drudgery and abject servitude, from his youth up even to the age of feebleness and decrepitude? When a man has a numerous offspring, it may, indeed, be generous to sacrifice his own ease and happiness to their advancement. He may feel a virtuous pleasure in his conduct, which may sooth him under every circumstance of disagreeable toil or painful submission. But it is obvious to observe, that the most artful of men, and the greatest slaves to interest and ambition, are frequently unmarried men; and that they were unmarried, because their caution and timidity would never permit them to take a step which could never be revoked. Themselves, however unamiable, have been the only objects of their love; and the rest of mankind have been made use of merely as the instruments of their mean purposes and selfish gratifications. But the rest of mankind need not envy them, for they inflict on themselves the punishments they deserve. They are always craving and never satisfied; they suffer a torment which is justly represented by the heathen mythologists as infernal, that of being perpetually reaching after blessings which they can never grasp, of being prohibited to taste the fruit whose colour appears so charming to the eye, and whose flavour so delicious to the imagination.

How lovely and how happy, on the other hand, an open and ingenuous behaviour! An honest, unsuspicious

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heart diffuses a serenity over life, like that of a fine day, when no cloud conceals the blue æther, nor a blast ruffles the stillness of the air;—but a crafty and designing bosom is all tumult and darkness, and may be said to resemble a misty and disordered atmosphere in the comfortless climate of the poor Highlander. The one raises a man almost to the rank of an angel of light; the other sinks him to a level with the powers of darkness. The one constitutes a terrestial heaven in the breast, the other deforms and debases it till it becomes another Tartarus.

An open and ingenuous disposition is not only beautiful and greatly conducive to private happiness, but productive of many virtues essential to the welfare of society. What is society without confidence? But if the selfish and mean system which is established and recommended among many whose advice and example have weight, should universally prevail, in whom, and in what shall we be able to confide?—It is already shocking to a liberal mind to observe what a multitude of papers, parchments, oaths, and solemn engagements, is required, even in a trivial negociation. On the contrary, how comfortable and how honourable to human nature, if promises were bonds, and assertions affidavits. What pleasure and what improvement would be derived from conversation, if every one would dare to speak his real sentiments, with modesty and decorum, indeed, but without any unmanly fear of offending? To please by honest means, and from the pure motives of friendship and philanthropy, is a duty; but they who study the art of pleasing merely for their own sakes, are, of all characters, those which ought least to please, and which appear, when the masque is removed, the most disgustful. Truth and simplicity of manners are not only essential to virtue and happiness, but, as objects of taste, truly beautiful. Good minds will

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always be pleased with them, and bad minds we need not wish to please.

Since cunning and deceit are thus odious in themselves, and incompatible with real happiness and dignity, I cannot help thinking, that those instructors of the rising generation, who have insisted on simulation and dissimulation, on the *pensieri stretti*, on the thousand tricks of worldly wisdom, are no less mistaken in their ideas, than mean, contracted, and illiberal. Listen not, ye generous young men, whose hearts are yet untainted, listen not to the delusive advice of men so deluded or so base. Have courage enough to avow the sentiments of your souls, and let your countenance and your tongue be the heralds of your hearts. Please, consistently with truth and honour; or be contented not to please. Let justice and benevolence fill your bosom, and they will shine spontaneously, like the real gem, without the aid of a foil, and with the most durable and captivating brilliancy.

No. CXLVIII.

A REMEDY FOR DISCONTENT.

Complaints and murmurs are often loudest and most frequent among those who possess all the external means of temporal enjoyment. Something is still wanting, however high and opulent their condition, fully to complete their satisfaction. Suppose an indulgent Providence to accomplish every desire; are they now at last contented? Alas! no; their uneasiness seems for ever to increase, in proportion as their real necessities are diminished. It is in vain then to endeavour to make them happy by adding to their store, or aggrandizing their honours. Their appetite is no less insatiable than their taste fastidious.

But there yet may remain a remedy. Let those who are miserable among riches and grandeur, leave, for a

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moment, their elevated rank, and descend from their palaces to the humble habitations of real and unaffected woe. If their hearts are not destitute of feeling, they will return from the sad scenes to their closets, and on their knees pour forth the ejaculations of gratitude to that universal Parent who has given them abundance, and exempted them from the thousand ills, under the pressure of which the greater part of his children drag the load of life. Instead of spending their hours in brooding over their own imaginary evils, they will devote them to the alleviation of real misery among the destitute sons of indigence, in the neglected walks of vulgar life.

That one half of the world knows not how the other half lives, is a common and just observation. A fine lady, surrounded with every means of accommodation and luxury, complains in a moment of ennui, that surely no mortal is so wretched as herself. Her sufferings are too great for her acute sensibility. She expects pity from all her acquaintance, and pleases herself with the fantastic idea that she is an example of singular misfortune, and remarkable patience. Physicians attend, and with affected solicitude feel the healthy pulse, which, however, they dare not pronounce healthy, lest they should give offence by attempting to spoil the refined luxury of fancied woe. To be supposed always ill, and consequently to be always exciting the tender attention and inquiries of all around, is a state so interesting, so charming in the ideas of the weak, luxurious, and indolent minds, that many spend their lives in a perpetual state of imaginary convalescence. There is something so indelicate in being hale, hearty, and stout, like a rosy milk-maid, that a very fine and very high-bred lady is almost ready to faint at the idea. From excessive indulgence, she becomes at last in reality what she at first only fancied herself, a perpe-

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tual invalid. By a just retribution she is really punished with that wretchedness, of which she ungratefully and unreasonably complained in the midst of health, ease, and opulence.

One might ask all the sisterhood and fraternity of rich and healthy murmurers, Have you compared your situation and circumstances with that of those of your fellow-creatures who are condemned to perpetual labour for a morsel of bread? Have you compared your situation with that of those who have hardly ever seen the sun, but live confined in tin mines, lead mines, and coal pits? Before you call yourself wretched, take a survey of the gaols, in which unfortunate and honest debtors are doomed to pine; walk through the wards of an hospital; think of the hardships of a common soldier or sailor; think of the galley-slave; nay, think of your poor neighbour at the next cottage; and, if there were not danger of its being called unpolite and methodistical, I would add, think of Him who, for your sake, sweated, as it were, drops of blood on Calvary.

It is, indeed, a duty to consider the evils of those who are placed beneath us; for the chief purpose of Christianity is, to alleviate the miseries of that part of mankind whom the world despises; but whom He who made them, pities, like as a father pitieth his own children. Their miseries are not fanciful, their complaints are not exaggerated. The clergy, when they are called upon to visit the sick, or to baptize new-born infants, are often spectators of such scenes as would cure the discontented of every malady. The following representation is but too real, and may be paralleled in many of its circumstances in almost every parish throughout the kingdom.

The minister of a country village was called upon to baptize an infant just born. The cottage was situ-

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ated on a lonely common; and as it was in the midst of winter, and the floods were out, it was absolutely necessary to wade in water through the lower room, to a ladder, which served instead of stairs. The chamber (and it was the only one) was so low, that you could not stand upright in it; there was one window, which admitted air as freely as light, for the rags which had been stuffed into the broken panes were now taken out to contribute to the covering of the infant. In a dark corner of the room stood a small bedstead without furniture, and on it lay the dead mother, who had just expired in labour for want of assistance. The father was sitting on a little stool by the fire-place, though there was no fire, and endeavouring to keep the infant warm in his bosom. Five of the seven children, half-naked, were asking their father for a piece of bread, while a fine boy, of about three years old, was standing by his mother at the bed-side, and crying as he was wont to do, "Take me, take me, mammy."—"Mammy is asleep," said one of his sisters, with tears standing on her cheeks which she tried to conceal; "mammy is asleep, Johnny; go play with the baby on daddy's knee." The father took him up on his knee, and his grief, which had hitherto kept him dumb, and in a state of temporary insensibility, burst out in a torrent of tears, and relieved his heart, which seemed ready to break. "Don't cry, pray don't cry," said the eldest boy, "the nurse is coming up stairs with a two-penny loaf in her hand, and mammy will wake presently, and I will carry her the largest piece." Upon this, an old woman, crooked with age, and clothed in tatters, came hobbling on her little stick into the room, and, after heaving a groan, calmly sat down, dressed the child in its rags, then divided the loaf as far as it would go, and informed the poor man that the churchwardens, to whom she had gone, would send some relief as soon

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as they had dispatched a naughty baggage to her own parish, who had delivered herself of twins in the Esquire's hovel. Relief indeed was sent, and a little contribution afterwards raised by the interposition of the minister. If he had not seen the case, it would have passed on as a common affair, and a thing of course.

Ministers and medical practitioners are often witnesses to scenes as wretched as this; where, to poverty, cold, nakedness, and death, are added the languors of lingering and loathsome diseases, and the torments of excruciating pain. A feeling heart, among the rich and the great, who are at the same time querulous without cause, would learn a lesson in many a garret of Broad St. Giles's or Shoreditch, more efficacious than all the lectures of the moral or divine philosopher.

I cannot help mentioning and applauding a mode of charity of late much encouraged in this metropolis, which is indeed distinguished above all others for the wisdom and variety of its eleemosynary institutions. Dispensaries are established for the poor, and patients visited at their own habitations by physicians of allowed skill and distinguished character. Such institutions owe their origin and support to HIM "WHO WENT ABOUT HEALING ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF DISEASE AMONG THE PEOPLE."

No. CXLIX.

ON THE UTILITY OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, AND OF ADMITTING MUSIC AND EXTERNAL MAGNIFICENCE IN PLACES OF DEVOTION.

IF all men were enlightened by education and philosophy, and at all hours actuated by the principles of reason, it would be unnecessary to have recourse to external objects in producing devout and virtuous af-

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fections. But as there must always be a great majority, who from the want of opportunities or capacities for improvement, are weak and ignorant; and as even among the wise and learned there are none who are constantly exempted from the common infirmities of human nature, it becomes expedient to devise modes of operating on the soul through the medium of the senses. It was for this reason, that in all great communities the officers and offices of religion have been surrounded with whatever is calculated to rouse the attention, to interest the heart, to strike the eye, and to elevate the imagination.

I cannot help thinking, therefore, that those well-meaning reformers, who wish to divest religion of external splendour, are unacquainted with the nature of man, or influenced by narrow motives. They mean, perhaps, to spiritualize every thing, and the purpose is laudable; but they know not, or they consider not, that ordinary spirits, such as are those of the vicious and vulgar, are most easily and effectually touched by the instrumentality of exterior and material objects. He who wishes to penetrate to the recesses of the vulgar mind, will succeed better by the co-operation of the eyes and the ears, than merely by addressing the rational faculty.

An idea may be formed of the potency of sounds and sights, unassisted by reason, if we contemplate their effect in war. The drum, the fife, the habiliments of a soldier, the flag, and all the pomp and parade of military transactions, contribute, perhaps more than any sense of duty, or any native or acquired sentiments of bravery, to lead on the embattled phalanx even to the cannon's mouth. It is something operating in the mind in a similar manner, which most easily bows the stubborn knee of the hardened offender, and subdues to softness the steely heart, on which no force of ar-

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gument could of itself stamp an impression. There are few who cannot hear or see, but many who cannot understand. All can feel a powerful stroke on the fancy or passions, but few, in comparison, are affected by the most perfect syllogism.

Music, therefore, poetry, painting, and architecture, may very reasonably be associated as auxiliaries of Reason, an empress, whose subjects are rebellious. And I cannot help thinking, that they who repudiate all ornament, and all the modes of affecting the senses of the vulgar in the offices of religion, as indecent, impious, or improper, do not recollect the temple of Solomon, but suffer their good sense to be overpowered in this instance by the zeal of a barbarous fanaticism.

The offices of religion where music and artificial embellishments are admitted, become so alluring, that those who would never think of their more serious duties, are often invited by them to the church, and gradually converted. Like the rake of antiquity, who mingled in the audience of a philosopher with a design to ridicule him, but who was made a convert before his departure, many of the loose and profligate votaries of vice have been enticed by the music and afterwards reformed by the sermon, which they intended to slight, and perhaps had begun to deride.

The processions and pompous formalities of religion, however exploded in the warmth of reformation as papistical relics, are certainly useful in the community when they are not suffered to exceed the bounds of moderation. They were esteemed and observed in ancient Athens and ancient Rome, by those who loved and enjoyed liberty in its fullest extent. They were found to aggrandize the majesty of empire, to inspire a generous enthusiasm into the minds of the people, and to furnish them with an amusement, not only innocent and improving, but attended with a very high and

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satisfactory pleasure. None can detest popery more than myself; but yet it appears to me, that many of the splendid and august scenes which that persuasion admits, are highly useful, if considered only as furnishing a harmless entertainment to the lower orders of mankind. What charms can a London carman, chairman, hackney-coachman, fish-woman, and all the numerous tribes of the lowest class, find in an English meeting or a church? but they would be delighted, and very powerfully affected, with the grandeur and solemnity of a Romish procession. As we have no allurement adapted to their ignorant and rude minds, they spend the Sunday at an alehouse, even at the next door to the church, without a wish to enter the consecrated place. All that passes there is above their comprehension. They are but little removed from the state of the brutes, and they must remain so; for there is nothing, in the only places in which they have an opportunity of instruction, to strike their imagination, and penetrate, through the passage of the senses, to the shrine of the dormant soul.

It is true, indeed, that we admit music in the established church; but it is also true, that it is in general a kind of music which is little better than discord to the vulgar ear. For in the metropolis, where chiefly organs are to be found, the performers are too fond of showing their powers of execution, and seldom play those simple tunes which alone can affect the minds of the simple and uniformed.

There has been much conversation on the subject of adorning St. Paul's cathedral with the productions of the pencil. Many artists, it is said, have offered to contribute the efforts of their ingenuity. Some scruples have arisen to impede the design. In this age they cannot be puritanical. I really think that the admission of paintings in the church, under due regu-

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lations, would produce a desirable effect on the morals of the lower classes. But if painting is not to be admitted, there surely can be no objection to sculpture. Westminster-abbey is crowded with monuments; and I will venture to predict that our posterity will see St. Paul's equally honoured. I hope the event will not take place so late as to exclude such artists as Bacon, or, if painting is admitted, such as Reynolds* and West.

With an union of architecture, poetry, music, and painting, we may exclaim with Bruyère: "Que de magnificence et de dignité dans le culte divin! que d'élévation dans les Pseaumes! que de majesté dans les chants! que de pompe dans les solemnités! tout édifie et tout annonce la présence du Saint des Saints."

No. CL.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELOQUENCE.

In taking a view of parliamentary eloquence, I mean to consider it as totally independent of party and politics, and solely as a subject of literary taste. It must be a peculiar narrowness of spirit which bestows or refuses applause to the productions of genius, because they are found to favour either a court or an opposition. I would allow an equal share of praise to equal genius, whether it appeared in a leader of the minority, or in the first minister of state.

The speeches from the throne are little more than the formalities of office. It would be unreasonable to

* Since this was written, death has snatched the pencil from the hand of Reynolds, and many monuments have been erected in St Paul's. It is to be regretted that the names of some of the persons to whose honour they are erected, are scarcely recorded any where else. The honour should be reserved, with the strictest impartiality, for those who are illustriously good and great.

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expect in them the fire, the pathos, the argument of genuine and animated oratory. But they usually possess an air of dignity highly proper and characteristical. They breathe a spirit of sincerity and paternal tenderness, which at once marks the judgment of the composer, and endears the speaker to his people. There was one on the commencement of the war with America, which deserves to be selected as a very spirited and memorable harangue. It would have adorned the page of a Livy. "The resolutions of parliament," said his Majesty, "breathed a spirit of moderation and forbearance.—I have acted with the same temper; anxious to prevent, if it had been possible, the effusion of the blood of my subjects, and the calamities which are inseparable from a state of war; still hoping, that my people in America would have discerned the traitorous views of their leaders, and have been convinced, that to be a subject to Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world.

"The rebellious war now levied is become more general, and is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire I need not dwell on the fatal effects of the success of such a plan. The object is too important, the spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great tenderness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expense of blood and treasure. —The constant employment of my thoughts, and the most earnest wishes of my heart, tend wholly to the safety and happiness of all my people."—The spirit of a great king, and the tender solicitude which speaks the true father of his people, render this speech truly excellent, and, indeed, its

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excellence was evinced by its effects; for soon after it was disseminated over the nation, the American war, which was once universally odious, became rather popular. Yet, though the instability of human affairs every day strikes the mind of a contemplative man, little did the composer of the above passage conceive, that in a few years the high spirit of the British nation would be reduced to the humiliating necessity of almost supplicating for peace the deluded people of America.

In an assembly like the higher house, consisting of men, in whose education no expense has been spared, who are, or who ought to be, animated by their own exalted situation and the examples of an illustrious ancestry, one might reasonably expect to find frequent examples of distinguished eloquence. But it really would be difficult to name a single peer who has attracted notice or admiration for the classical elegance of his matter or language. The law lords, relying on their professional knowledge, do, indeed, frequently make long and bold speeches; but not often such as please an Attic or a Roman taste, or deserve the praise of pure and legitimate oratory. Of all the speeches spoken in the house, how few have ever been collected and preserved in libraries, as models of classical elegance! Passion and personal animosity have, indeed, produced many invectives, which gratify the spleen of party, and are for the time extolled beyond all the productions of preceding ingenuity. But is there extant a single volume of speeches, by the most famous among the orators of the upper house, which can be produced as a classical book, or stand in competition with the orations of Cicero? I think it necessary to repeat, that my remarks have not the least reference to party. I am in search of an orator, to whom the epithet of classical may be justly applied. I regret that the fury of party on one side, and

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the meanness of servility on the other, have for the most part excluded, that true taste, true grace, and true spirit, which is necessary to form a classical orator, from the harangues of an assembly justly deemed the most august in Europe.

The House of Commons has always been esteemed a very distinguished theatre of modern eloquence. And there indeed, notwithstanding the same impediments which prevail among the peers, it is easy to produce many splendid examples. In the House of Commons, men have been stimulated by the most powerful motives, by the hopes of rising; in the House of Lords they have already risen. But though we join in the applause of common fame, yet let us ask, where are to be found the volumes of oratorical elegance? Have the speeches which have gained the praise of admiring kingdoms, been no where collected and recorded? Do we lock them up in our book-cases, and put them into the hands of our children as models for imitation, as lessons to form their young minds, and raise a succession of orators and patriots? No; the speeches are celebrated at first, and while they answer a temporary purpose. They are like vegetables of a night, or insects of a day. They have seldom that solidity of merit which can render the ore valuable when the stamp is effaced, and the occasion of it almost forgotten and quite disregarded; which can preserve the plate still saleable after the fashion is antiquated. Glorious was the eloquence of Chatham while a commoner. Nations shook at the thunder of his voice. But where are the harangues? are they preserved as illustrious models for the instruction of posterity? Instead of being engraven on brass, they are almost sunk into an oblivion, like the soldiers whose bones once whitened the plains of Germany. Yet I mean not to detract from his glories. Language

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can scarcely supply terms to express the weight of his authority, the magnitude of his mind and his character, and the efficacy with which he thought, decided, spoke, and acted. But let it not escape the reader's attention, that we are inquiring for a rival to the masterly and transcendent excellence of a Cicero and a Demosthenes. If such has of late appeared among us, the curiosity of this age would have preserved it; and if it be preserved, let the volume be openly produced, and the public will embrace it as an invaluable treasure.

The applause indeed bestowed on one orator, is scarcely adequate to his literary merit. Mr. Burke has produced to the world very honourable testimonies of his natural abilities and his acquired taste. What orations are there published of modern members, which can bear a comparison with those of Mr. Burke? With what dignity he addressed the people of Bristol; and how mean and little did they appear, contrasted with him whom they rejected! Like Socrates before the judges, he appeared more like their master than their suppliant. He concludes with a spirit worthy of him who wrote on the sublime and beautiful; worthy of a polished ancient in the best of ages—"And now, gentlemen," says he, "on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you; let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges brought against me. I do not here stand accused of venality, or neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any one man in any description.—No; the charges against me are all of one kind,

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that I have pushed the general principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression and distress, I will think of this accusation, and be comforted."

There are not indeed many of the members who favour the public with their harangues, so that we have not an opportunity of judging of all so well as of Mr. Burke's. Who but must regret that Mr. Fox did not himself polish and publish those orations, which, while they charmed all who heard them, tended to the salvation of his country, and the happiness of the human race. The opportunity is now lost. The friend of man, whose benevolent heart and eloquent tongue were enabled to plead with success the cause of liberty and humanity in a corrupt and venal age, is consigned to the silent grave. Had he himself printed his orations, the world would have been illuminated by his wisdom, and philanthropy would have triumphed in Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa, and America. We must, however, acknowledge our obligations to the ingenious persons who take the debates. They faithfully give the matter of a speech, but they cannot give the soul of eloquence.

No. CLI.

A LIFE OF LETTERS USUALLY A LIFE OF COMPARATIVE INNOCENCE.

It is not the least among the happy effects of a studious life, that it withdraws the student from the turbulent scenes and pursuits, in which it is scarcely less difficult to preserve innocence than tranquillity. Successful study requires so much attention, and engrosses so much of the heart, that he who is deeply

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engaged in it, though he may indeed be liable to temporary lapses, will seldom contract an inveterate habit of immorality. There is in all books of character a reverence for virtue, and a tendency to inspire a laudable emulation. He who is early, long, and successfully conversant with them, will find his bosom filled with the love of truth, and affected with a delicate sense of honour. By constantly exercising his reason, his passions are gradually reduced to subjection, and his head and heart keep pace with each other in improvement. But when I assert that such are the consequences of literary pursuits, it is necessary to distinguish between the real and pretended student; for there are many desultory readers, and volatile men of parts, who affect eccentricity, whose lives, if one may so express it, are uniformly irregular, and who consequently exhibit remarkable instances of misery and misfortune.

Folly and imprudence will produce moral and natural evil, their genuine offspring, in all situations and modes of life. The knowledge of arts and sciences cannot prevent the vices and the woes which must arise from the want of knowing how to regulate our private and social conduct. But where prudence and virtue are not deficient, I believe few walks of life are pleasanter and safer than those which lead through the regions of literature.

Many among mankind are involved in perpetual tumult, so that when they feel an inclination to consider their duty, their nature, their truest happiness, they can scarcely find an opportunity. But he, whom Providence has blessed with an enlightened mind, and the command of his own time, is enabled to form his heart, and direct his choice, according to the dictates of the most improved intellects, and the examples of the most accomplished characters. He is, indeed, a

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creature far superior to the common herd of men, and, being acquainted with pure and exalted pleasures, lies not under the necessity of seeking delight in the grosser gratifications. He considers not property as the chief good; he is therefore free from temptations to violate his integrity. Disappointment in matters of interest will never render him uneasy or discontented, for his books have discovered to him a treasure more valuable, in his estimation, than the riches of Peru. Through all the vicissitudes of life, he has a source of consolation in the retirement of his library, and in the principles and reflections of his own bosom. From his reading he will collect a just estimate of the world and of all around him; and, as he will cherish no unreasonable expectations, he will be exempted from severe disappointment.

The conversation of many abounds with slander and detraction, not originally and entirely derived from a malignity of nature, but also from ignorance, from a vacancy of intellect, and from an inability to expatiate on general and generous topics. But, whatever be the motive of them, it is certain that few crimes are more injurious to private happiness, and opposite to the spirit of our amiable religion, than slander and detraction. The man of reading is under no temptation to calumniate his neighbour from the defect of ideas, or a want of taste for liberal and refined conversation. He interests himself in his neighbour's happiness; but does not pry into the affairs, nor sit in judgment on the domestic arrangements, of another's family. Most of the topics of scandal are too little and too low for him. He will not stoop from his elevation low enough to pick the dirty trifles from the ground. His thoughts are engaged in elegant and refined subjects, far removed from all which tend to excite envy, jealousy, or malevolence.

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The want of employment is one of the frequent causes of vice; but he who loves a book will never want employment. The pursuits of learning are boundless, and they present to the mind a delightful variety which cannot be exhausted. No life is long enough to see all the beautiful pictures which the arts and sciences, or which history, poetry, and eloquence, are able to display. The man of letters possesses the power of calling up a succession of scenes to his view infinitely numerous and diversified. He is therefore secured from that unhappy state, which urges many to vice and dissipation, merely to fill a painful vacuity. Even though his pursuits should be trifling, and his discoveries unimportant, yet they are harmless to others, and useful to himself, as preservatives of his innocence. Let him not be ridiculed or condemned, even though he should spend his time in collecting and describing moths, mosses, shells, birds, weeds, or coins; for he who loves these things seldom sets his affections on pelf, or any of those objects which corrupt and divide human society. He who finds his pleasure in a museum or a library, will not be often seen in the tavern, in the brothel, or at the gaming-table. He is pleased if he possesses a non-descript fossil, and envies not the wretched enjoyments of the intemperate, nor the ill-gotten wealth of the oppressor or extortioner.

But his pursuits have usually a title to much greater praise than that of being inoffensive. Suppose him in any of the liberal professions. If a clergyman, for instance, he devotes his time and abilities to the preparation of dissuasives from vice, from folly, from misconduct, from infidelity, from all that contributes to aggravate the wretchedness of wretched human nature. Here the pleasures naturally resulting from literary occupations are improved by the sublime sensations of active benevolence, the comfortable consciousness of

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advancing the truest happiness of those among our poor fellow-creatures who have not enjoyed the advantages of education. In the performance of the godlike office of a true parish priest, there is a necessity of setting an example, and of preserving decorum of character; a necessity which conduces much to the security of innocence and good conduct. It is often a great happiness to be placed in a rank, where, to the restraints of conscience and morality, are added the fear of peculiar shame, loss, and disgrace, necessarily consequent on ill behaviour. Human nature wants every support to keep it from lapsing into depravity. Even interest and a solicitude for reputation, when, in some thoughtless interval, the pillars of virtue begin to totter, may stop the fall. The possession of a valuable character, which may be lost, and of a dignity which must be supported, are often very useful auxiliaries in defending the citadel against the temporary assaults of passion and temptation.

Since, then, the pursuit of letters is attended with many circumstances peculiarly favourable to innocence, and consequently to enjoyment of the purest and most permanent species, they who have been fixed in so desirable a life as a life of learning, ought to be grateful to Providence for their fortunate lot, and endeavour to make the best return in their power, by devoting their leisure, their abilities, and their acquirements, to performing the will of God, and promoting the benefit of mankind.

No. CLII.

ON THE ADVANTAGE WHICH MAY BE DERIVED TO THE TENDER AND PATHETIC STYLE FROM USING THE WORDS AND PHRASES OF SCRIPTURE.

It is observable that an audience often laughs or yawns in the most interesting scenes of a modern tragedy; a lamentable proof of the poet's imbecility.

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The poet! he may, indeed, be a versifier and a declaimer, but he is no poet, who tells a tragic tale without eliciting a tear. Let us not profane the sacred name of poet by bestowing it on the feeble poetaster.

It is not enough that the language of a tragedy is flowery, the smiles and metaphors brilliant, the verse melodius; there must be a charm added by the creative power of almighty genius, which no didactic rules can teach, which cannot be adequately described, but which is powerfully felt by the vibrations of the heart-strings, and which causes an irresistible overflowing of the Δακρυων πηγαι, the *sacri fontes lachrymarum.**

Florid diction and pompous declamation are, indeed, found to be the least adapted of all modes of address to affect the finer sensibilities of nature. Plain words, without epithets, without metaphors, without similes, have oftener excited emotions of the tenderest sympathy, than the most laboured composition of Corneille. Ye who would learn to touch the heart, go not to the schools of France, but become the disciples of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Sterne, and Chatterton. Thou captivating simplicity! 'tis thine at once to effect what all the artifices of rhetoric, with all its tropes and figures, tediously and vainly labour to accomplish. 'Tis thine to dissolve the hardest heart, and to force even nerves of steel to tremble. A few words of simple pathos will penetrate the soul to the quick, when a hundred lines of declamation shall assail it as feebly and ineffectually, as a gentle gale the rock of Gibraltar.

A writer of taste and genius may avail himself greatly in pathetic compositions, by adopting the many words and phrases, remarkable for their beautiful simplicity, which are interspersed in that pleasing, as well as venerable book, the Holy Bible. I cannot, indeed, en-

* The sacred source of tears.

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firely agree with those zealous critics who pretend to discover in the Scriptures all the graces of all the best classics. To please the ear and imagination, were very inferior objects in the benevolent mind of Him who caused all holy Scripture to be written for our use. But, at the same time, it is certain, they abound in such beauties as never fail to please the most cultivated taste. Besides their astonishing sublimity, they have many passages exquisitely tender and pathetic. Our admirable translation has preserved many of them in all their beauty; and an English writer may select from it a diction better suited to raise the sympathy of grief, than from the most celebrated models of human composition.

Sterne, who, though he is justly condemned for his libertinism, possessed an uncommon talent for the pathetic, has availed himself greatly of the Scriptural language. In all his most affecting passages, he has imitated the turn, style, manner, and simplicity, of the sacred writers, and in many of them has transcribed whole sentences. He found no language of his own could equal the finely expressive diction of our common translation. There are a hundred instances of his imitating Scripture interspersed in all the better parts of his works, and no reader of common observation can pass by them unnoticed. I will quote only one or two instances, taken from the most admired pieces in the tender style. "Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms. Affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarce earthly, and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eyes look for in woman, that could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, or those of Eliza out of mine, she should not only eat of my bread, and drink of my cup, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.

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"Adieu, poor luckless maiden! imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger, as he sojourneth on his way, now pours into thy wounds. The Being who has twice bruised thee can only bind them up for ever." Again, in his description of a captive. "As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye toward the door, then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh. I saw the iron enter into his soul." It is easy, but it is not necessary, to adduce many more instances in which a writer, who eminently excelled in the power of moving the affections, felt himself unequal to the task of advancing the style of pathos to its highest perfection, and sought assistance of the Bible.

It is easy to see that the writer of so many tender and simple passages had imitated the delightful book of Ruth. With what pleasure did a man of his feeling read, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Sterne stole the very spirit of this passage, and indeed all the fine strokes of tenderness, and many a one there is, in a book which is often laid aside by polite scholars as absurd and obsolete. The choice which Sterne has made of texts and of citations from the Scriptures in his sermons, are proofs that he (who was one of the best judges of the pathetic) was particularly struck with the affecting tenderness and lovely simplicity of Scriptural language.

The poet, therefore, who means to produce a tragedy which shall be able to stand its ground even after the first nine nights, without the aid of puffing,

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and without filling the pit and boxes with orders, should sometimes go to the same fountain, and drink the waters of poetical inspiration of which Sterne drank so copiously. He will improve greatly by studying the language and histories of Joseph, Saul, and Jonathan, of Ruth, of Job, of the Psalms, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of many single passages every where interspersed, and of the parables in the New Testament. Judgment and taste are certainly necessary to select; but he may depend upon it, that a word or two well selected will gain him the truest applause, that which is conveyed in sighs and tears. Let him fully persuade himself, that the only method of operating powerfully on the feelings of nature, is to renounce art and affectation, and to adhere to truth and simplicity.

Something is necessary to be done to produce an alteration. The theatrical state is in its decline. It cannot much longer be supported by fine dresses, painted scenes, music, dancing, and pantomime. We have hearts, as well as ears and eyes; if they know not how to touch our passions at Old Drury, let us hasten to the Opera-house, and see the man stand upon one leg.

No. CLIII.

ON READING MERELY WITH A VIEW TO AMUSEMENT.

THERE are many who spend much of their time in reading, but who read as they play at cards, with no other intention but to pass their time without labouring under the intolerable burden of a total inactivity. The more trifling the book, the better they suppose it suited to their purpose. Plays, pamphlets, memoirs, novels, and whatever entertains them without requiring any great degree of attention, constitute the whole of their library. Even these are read in a desultory manner, without the interference of taste, or the trou-

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ble of selection. Indeed this light food for the mind is so much wanted, that the circulating libraries lay in a stock of it every year; and an assortment of summer-reading is in as great request at the booksellers' in the watering-places, as a variety of new spring-patterns at the silk-mercers' in Pall-Mall. The fine lady and gentleman, who have nothing to do but to pursue their amusement, and in whose delicate minds the dressing of the hair is a business of the first importance, commonly spend two or three hours every day under the hands of the friseur; but then the time is by no means wasted; for it is spent in summer-reading; and as the volumes which contain summer-reading are not large folios, and neither printed on the smallest type, nor on the most crowded page, one of them just serves to fill up the morning hours devoted to the artist of the comb. The gentle student rises from his chair when the operation is completed, takes off his flannel gown, sends back the half-bound book to the library, and enters upon the momentous business of making calls, without any odious gravity or seriousness, which might perhaps have remained with him had his morning studies required deep thought, or communicated to him a series of sober reflections. He can, indeed, in a rainy day, devour half a dozen volumes of summer-reading, and be no more incommoded than when he swallows as many puffs and syllabubs at the confectioner's.

It must be allowed that this kind of reading, trifling as it is, may often constitute an amusing and a very innocent pastime. But I will venture to say, that useful and improving reading might be found, that should be equally and indeed more entertaining. The same time spent on books of character, which is lavished away on literary trash, would render many a mind, which is now vain and superficial, really elegant, prudent, and well-informed. The time spent under the operation

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of the friseur is very properly spent in reading; but why should not the works of the English classics be used in preference to a vile translation from a foolish French novel? To a taste not vitiated, the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, and many other of their successful followers, are much more pleasing than the hasty productions of hireling writers, whose indigence compels them to be less solicitous about quality than quantity; who study not so much what is congruous to taste and truth, as what will catch the notice of the general reader, and answer the venal purpose of their employer by a rapid sale. Have we not many true histories, elegant in their style, abounding with matter most improving to the heart and understanding, and calculated to interest and entertain, in a very high degree, by gratifying curiosity? Unless we renounce our pretensions to reason, we must confess that such books are capable of furnishing more pleasure, exclusively of the improvement, than anonymous and unauthenticated anecdotes, memoirs, novels, voyages, travels, lives, and adventures.

There are those who have read more volumes than the profoundest scholars in the nation, who are yet unacquainted with the elements of science, with the most interesting facts of true history, with the maxims of philosophy, with the beauties of style, and with the extent and force of the language. They have read inattentively what indeed was scarcely worth attention; and they have immediately forgotten what was too futile to deserve remembrance. Had they possessed judgment sufficient to point out the proper books, and resolution to pursue the dictates of their judgment, they would have enriched their minds with inestimable treasures, and acquired the reputation and satisfaction of solid scholars. The same exertions of their eyes, the same consumption of their time, the same sedentary confinement, would have earned a prize of sufficient

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value to repay them amply for every effort of diligence. But now they have, perhaps, injured their eyes, ruined their health, neglected their affairs, vitiated their taste, and possibly corrupted their morals, or weakened their faith, with no return but the amusement of the moment, or the retention of false facts, distorted figures of life and manners, or trifling anecdotes, the lumber of the head and not the furniture.

Persons advanced in life, or labouring under sickness and infirmity, have an unquestionable right to amuse themselves with whatever can innocently alleviate their evils, and enable them to pass away the lagging hours in a sweet oblivion. Their reading, like their diet, may be light, and more adapted to tickle a sickly palate, than to afford solid and substantial nourishment. But in youth, health, and vigour, who would voluntarily confine themselves to the weakness and insipidity of water-gruel? Who would drink poison, when the cup of health and refreshment is at hand?

It is, indeed, lamentable to observe young persons of lively parts, and with a love of reading, devoting those years and those abilities, which might render them valuable members of society, to such studies as tend only to dissipate their ideas, to vitiate their morals, to womanize their spirits, and to render them the dastardly and degenerate sons of those to whom it was once a glorious distinction to bear the name of Britons. There is no doubt but that the reading of the present age has a tendency to cause a decline in public as well as private virtue.

No. CLIV.

ON A METHOD OF STUDY, WRITTEN BY JOACHIMUS FORTIUS RINGELBERGIUS.

There is a little treatise on the method of study written by Fortius, which, in the last two centuries, was a great favourite among scholars, and contributed

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much to animate their industry. The learned Erpenius acknowledges himself originally indebted to it for all his acquisitions. He met with it at the age of sixteen, and in consequence of its suggestions, though he was then totally averse from a studious life, and had made no proficiency in learning, yet he afterwards became a distinguished scholar. The treatise had become scarce, and Erpenius generously printed a new edition, that others might partake of the benefit which he had himself enjoyed. He published it with the title of *Liber vere Aureus,* or the Truly Golden Treatise.

In the epistle to the reader, which Erpenius has prefixed, he speaks of the animating effect of the book, in terms so warm, and with so much gratitude, that a student would be wanting to himself not to gratify his curiosity by giving it a perusal. The treatise is short, and contains many passages which tend to encourage the scholar in his pursuits, and to inspire him with an ardour and enthusiasm, like that excited in the soldier by the drum and trumpet, as he is marching on to battle. I believe there could not be found a better exhortation to study for the use of boys, if the good passages were not disgraced by others so ridiculous, as almost bring the writer under the imputation of lunacy. His literary enthusiasm had certainly transported him, in several instances, far beyond the limits of his own improved reason.

I will select a few hints from the little tract, which may not only serve as a curious specimen to the English reader, but may rouse him from his indolence. The whole is, indeed, more valuable for the spirit and fire which it conduces to raise, than for its particular directions. It is rather exhortatory than didactic.

"How mean," says he, speaking of the scope at

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which students ought to aim, "how timid, how abject, must be that spirit which can sit down contented with mediocrity! As for myself, all that is within me is on fire. I had rather," he proceeds in his strong manner, "be torn in a thousand pieces, than relax my resolution of reaching the sublimest heights of virtue and knowledge. I am of opinion, that nothing is so arduous, nothing so admirable in human affairs, which may not be obtained by the industry of man. We are descended from heaven; thither let us go, whence we derived our origin. Let nothing satisfy us lower than the summit of all excellence. This summit," says he, "I point out as the proper scope of the student."

"But labour must be a delight, and the pleasures of luxury despised. Shall we submit to be extinguished for ever without honour, without remembrance, ἀνθρωποι οὐδὲν ἐπιδεδεγμένοι, without having done any thing like men?" The whole of this chapter is written in a very uncommon style of literary enthusiasm, and I think it can hardly fail of inflaming a youthful imagination. If such ideas were early infixed in the bosom of an ingenious and ingenuous boy, what improvement in virtue, and in all useful qualities, might not be expected?

"That we must never despair," is the title of his third chapter. "If in our ascent, we should fall headlong a thousand times, we must begin to climb again every time more ardently, and fly to the summit with recruited vigour! Let no one be dejected if he is not conscious of any great advancement at first. The merchant thinks himself happy if, after a ten years' voyage, after a thousand dangers, he at last improves his fortune; and shall we, like poor-spirited creatures, give up all hopes after the first onset. *Quodcunque imperavit animus obtinuit:* Whatever the mind has commanded itself to do, it has usually obtained its purpose.

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"Riches must have no charms, compared to the charms of literature. Poverty is favourable to the success of all literary pursuits. I mean not to throw contempt on money in general, but on that exorbitant wealth which allures the mind from study. But your parents," says he, "would rather choose that you should be guilty of perjury or murder, than not know how to value money.

"The student must be desirous of praise. It is a promising presage of success to be roused by praise when one shall have done well, and to be grieved and incited to higher aims, on finding himself blamed or outdone by another. He who aspires at the summit must be passionately fond of glory.

"Thus have the first qualities, indispensably requisite in a youth devoted to study, been mentioned. He must aim at the highest points, he must love labour, he must never despair, he must despise riches, he must be greedy of praise. It remains that we prescribe the methods. There are, then, three gradations in the modes of study; hearing, teaching, writing. It is a good and easy method to hear, it is a better and easier to teach, and the best and easiest of all to write. Lectures are dull; because it is tedious to confine liberty of thought to the voice of the reader. But when we teach or write, the very exercise itself precludes all tædium."

Though the treatise of this eccentric author is short, yet to make an useful abbreviation of it would require more room than the limits I usually prescribe to my papers will allow. I mean only to give a little specimen of the spirit in which this very extraordinary writer has composed his once celebrated treatise. There are certainly many things in it which can scarcely fail to stimulate an honest mind, sincerely and seriously devoted to letters. A severe critic, or a

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lover of ridicule, will find much, both in the matter and the style, to censure and deride. But still there is something in this writer so honest and so warm, that a good-natured mind cannot help being entertained even with his absurdities, and inclined to overlook them amidst the greater abundance of valuable advice. I believe the copies are not very scarce, and earnestly recommend, both to the young student and the lover of literary curiosities, to devote half an hour to the perusal of it, if it should fall into their hands.

Fortius was a very ingenious man, not only in polite learning and in the sciences, but in the arts of mechanical writing, painting, and engraving. Indeed these were his first pursuts and employments, and he did not apply himself to learning Latin till his seventeeth year; but such was the force of his genius that he then made a rapid proficiency. He was certainly a man of genius; and though not quite correct in his language, yet he wrote Latin with much more spirit and vivacity than most of the Dutch and German writers of his age. He acquired the Greek language, and could almost repeat Homer from beginning to end. He was well versed in various sciences, and wrote ingeniously upon them; but his tracts are more curious than useful. He would have been an excellent writer, and profound philosopher, had he lived in an age when the follies of judicial astrology were exploded, and hypothesis reduced to the test of experiment.

No. CLV.

ON THE FOLLY OF SACRIFICING COMFORT TO TASTE.

There are certain homely, but sweet comforts and conveniences, the absence of which no elegance can supply. But as they sometimes have nothing of external splendour, they are sometimes sacrificed to the gratification of vanity. We live too much in the

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eyes and minds of others, and too little to our own hearts, and too little to our own consciences, and too little to our own satisfaction. We are more anxious to appear, than to be, happy.

According to the present modes of living, and ideas of propriety, an ostentatious appearance must be at all events, and in all instances, supported. If we can preserve a glittering and glossy varnish, we disregard the interior materials and solid substance. Many show a disposition in every part of their conduct, similar to that of the Frenchman, who had rather go without a shirt than without ruffles; rather starve as a count, than enjoy affluence and independence as a honest merchant or manufacturer. Men idolize the great, and the distinctions of fashionable life, with an idolatry so reverential and complete, that they seem to mistake it for their duty towards God. For, to use the words of the Catechism, do they not appear "to believe in them, to fear them, to love them with all their hearts, with all their minds, with all their souls, and with all their strength; to worship them, to give them thanks, to put their whole trust in them, to call upon them, to honour their names and their words, and to serve them truly all the days of their lives?" As they worship false gods, their blessings are of the kind which corresponds with the nature of their deities. They are shadowy and unsubstantial; dreams, bubbles, and meteors, which dance before their eyes, and often lead them to perdition.

It is really lamentable to behold families of a competent fortune, and respectable rank, who (while they deny themselves even the common pleasures of a plentiful table; while their kitchen is the cave of cold and famine; while their neighbours, relations, and friends pity and despise, as they pass, the comfortless and inhospitable door) scruple not to be profusely

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expensive in dress, furniture, building, equipage, at public entertainments, in excursions to Bath, Tunbridge, or Brighthelmstone. To feed the fashionable extravagance, they rob themselves of indulgences which they know to be more truly satisfactory; for who among them returns from the midnight assembly, or from the summer excursion, without complaining of dulness, fatigue, ennui, and insipidity? They have shown themselves, they have seen many fine persons and many fine things; but have they felt the delicious pleasures of domestic peace, the tranquil delights of social intercourse among their neighbours and old friends, at their own towns and villages, the solid satisfactions of a cool collected mind, the comforts arising from a disembarrassed state of finances, and the love and respect of the vicinage in which they were born and bred, and where their family was once respected and beloved?

To run in debt, and be involved in danger of arrests and imprisonment, are, in this age, almost the objects of fashionable ambition. To have an execution in the house, is to be in the same predicament with this baronet and the other lord, or with his grace the duke. The poor imitator of splendid misery, little greatness, and titled infamy, risques his liberty and last shilling to become a man of taste and fashion. He boasts that he is a happy man, for he is a man of pleasure; he knows how to enjoy life; he professes the important science called the *sçavoir vivre*. Give him the distinction which, in the littleness and blindness of his soul, he considers as the source of happiness and honour. Allow him his claim to taste, allow him the title of a man of pleasure, and, since he insists upon it, allow him his pretensions to *sçavoir vivre*. But at the same time he cannot deny that he is haunted by his creditors, that he is obliged to hide himself, lest he should

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lose his liberty; that he is eating the bread and the meat, and wearing the clothes, of those whose children are crying for a morsel, and shivering in rags. If he has brought himself to such a state as to feel no uneasiness when he reflects on his embarrassment, and its consequences to others; he is a base, worthless, and degenerate wretch. But if he is uneasy, where is his happiness? where his exalted enjoyments? How much happier had been this boaster of happiness, this pretender to a life of pleasure, had he lived within the limits of reason, duty, and his fortune, in love and unity with his own regular family, at his own fire-side, beloved, trusted, respected in his neighbourhood, afraid of no creditor or prosecution, nor of any thing else but of doing wrong? He might not, indeed, have made a figure on the turf; he might not have had the honour of leading the fashion; but he would probably have had health, wealth, fame, and peace. Many a man who is seldom seen, and never heard of, enjoys, in the silence and security of privacy, all which this sublunary state can afford to sweeten the cup, and to lighten the burden of life.

In things of an inferior nature, and such as are not immediately connected with moral conduct, the same predilection for external appearance, and the same neglect of solid comfort, when placed in competition with the display of an affected taste, are found to prevail. Our houses are often rendered cold, small, and inconvenient, for the sake of preserving a regularity of external figure, or of copying the architecture of a warmer climate. Our carriages are made dangerous or incommodious, for the sake of attracting the passenger's eye, by something new or singular in their shape, height, or fabric. Our dress is fashioned in uneasy forms, and with troublesome superfluities, or uncomfortable defects, just as the Proteus, Fashion,

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issues out the capricious edicts of a variable taste. We even eat and drink, see and hear, not according to our own appetites and senses, but as the prevalent taste happens to direct. In this refined age we are all persons of taste, from the hair-dresser and milliner, to the duke and duchess. The question is not what is right, prudent, pleasing, comfortable, but what is the ton and the taste. Hence beggarly finery, and lordly beggary.

The sacrifice of comfort to taste is visible in our modern gardens. I rejoice in the explosion of the Dutch manner. I expatiate with raptured eye and imagination over the noble scenes, as it were, created by a Kent and Brown. But at the same time I lament that our cold climate often renders the sublime and magnificent taste in gardening incompatible with comfort. Winter, as the poet says, often lingers in the lap of May. How pleasing to step out of the house, and bask under a sunny wall covered with bloom, to watch the expansion of a rose-bud, and to see even the humble pea and bean shooting up with all the vigour of vernal fertility! But now the mansion-house stands naked and forlorn. You descend from the flight of steps. You are saluted by the rudest breath of Eurus and Boreas. No trees, no walls, no out-houses, even the kitchen and offices subterraneous. Not a corner to seek the genial warmth of a meridian sun. Fine prospects indeed all around. But you cannot stay to look at them. You fly to your chimney corner, happy if the persecuting blast pursues you not to your last recess. We allow all that taste can claim. We admire and love her beauties; but they are dearly bought at the expense of those comforts, warmth and shelter.

A little and enclosed garden adds greatly to the real enjoyment of a rural retreat. Though taste has

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thrown down the walls, and laid all open, I venture to predict, that before the lapse of half a century, good sense and the love of comfort will rebuild them. The grounds beyond may still be laid out in the grandest and most beautiful style; but let the house stand near some little cultivated spot, where every vegetable beauty and delicacy may be displayed, and where the rigours of our inclement clime may be softened with elegant enclosures. The contrast between this, which I would call the domestic, and the other, which might be named the outer garden, or the grove, would produce an effect by no means unpleasing. They who have no taste for flowers, and the thousand beauties of an enclosed garden, have but little pretension to judgment in the graces of horticulture.

Indeed, such is the nature of man, we commonly advance improvement to the verge of impropriety. We now loathe the idea of a straight line, and a regular row of trees. But let us not, in the pride of our hearts, flatter ourselves with the unerring rectitude of our taste. Many of the ancients who possessed the best taste, not only in poetry and eloquence, but in arts, in painting, sculpture, architecture, were great admirers of plantations perfectly regular, and laid out in quincunxes. However vanity and fashion may dictate and declaim, the world will not always believe that Homer, Virgil, Cyrus, Cicero, Bacon, and Temple, who all admired regularity in plantations, were totally mistaken in their ideas of horticultural beauty.

Cicero informs us, in a fine quotation from Xenophon's economics, that when Lysander came to Cyrus, a prince equally distinguished for his glorious empire and his genius, Cyrus showed him a piece of ground well enclosed and completely planted. After the visitor had admired the tall and straight trees, and the rows regularly formed in a quincunx, and the ground

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clear of weeds and well cultivated, and the sweetness of the odours which exhaled from the flowers, he could not help expressing his admiration not only of the diligence, but the skill of him by whom all this was measured and marked out: upon which Cyrus answered, "It was myself who measured every thing, the rows of trees are of my disposing, the plan is mine, and many of the trees were planted with my own hand." An illustrious pattern, which I hope our English noblemen and gentlemen will not be afraid to follow. Why always employ a professed plan-maker? Why sacrifice their own amusement and inclination to the will of another, and to the imperious edicts of capricious fashion? Why sacrifice comfort and common sense to the idol fashion? A house and garden which may be delightful in Italy may be fit only for a temple of Æolus, and a place for wild beasts to take their pastime, in the cold and uncertain climate of England.

No. CLVI.

ON THE EXAMPLE OF HENRY THE FIFTH, AND THE BAD EFFECTS OF AN OPINION THAT A PROFLIGATE YOUTH IS LIKELY TO TERMINATE IN A WISE MANHOOD.

There are those who consider early profligacy as a mark of that spirit which seldom fails to produce, in the subsequent periods of life, a wise and a virtuous character. The example of Henry the fifth is often cited in confirmation of their opinion. Shakespeare has indeed represented his errors and reformation in so amiable a light, that many are not very much displeased when they see a young man beginning his career in riot and debauchery. While there is an appearance of spirit they regard not the vice.

The example of Henry the fifth has been applied particularly to heirs apparent of the crown. If a future king is found to be early initiated in the excesses

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of sensuality, it is a favourable presage, say the myrmidons around him, and we are referred to the example of Falstaff's Hal. If he devote his time to drinking, and be actually involved in perpetual intoxication, it is all the better, for do we not recollect Hal's exploits at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap? Dame Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, are illustrious instances to prove what company a prince should keep in order to become hereafter a great king. It is in the haunts of intemperance and vice, and in the company of sycophants and knaves, that he is, according to the vulgar phrase, to sow his wild oats, to spend the exuberance of his spirit, to subdue the ebullition of his blood, and to acquire a valuable species of moral experience.

It is true, indeed, that Henry the fifth is a remarkable instance of early profligacy and subsequent reformation. He is a remarkable, because he is a rare instance. For one who reforms and succeeds as he did, a thousand become either incurable debauchees, drunkards, and rogues, ruin their character and fortunes, or die under the operation of so rough an experiment. We hear not of those who are obliged to go to sea, to hide themselves on the continent, to skulk in the garrets of blind alleys, to spend their days in gaols, or are early carried to the church-yard amidst the thanks and rejoicings of their friends for so happy a deliverance from shame and ruin. But if one wild youth becomes but a tolerable good man, we are struck with the metamorphosis, as we are with every thing uncommon. We exaggerate his goodness, by comparing it with his previous depravity. We cite the example, as a consolatory topic, wherever we behold a young man, as the Scripture beautifully expresses it, walking in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes. We talk as if we almost congratulated a parent, when his son has spirit enough to violate, not only the rules of

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decency, but also the most sacred laws of morality and religion: an egregious folly, a most pernicious error.

Such fatal ideas have broken the heart of many a virtuous and feeling father. They have brought his hairs, before they were gray, to the grave. I have been much pleased with a passage in the sermons of the late Dr. Ogden, in which he recommends regularity and virtue to young men solely for the sake of their parents. "Stop, young man," says he, "stop a little, to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too much to bestow a moment's reflection on those who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all—all indeed thou canst not: alas! ill had been thy lot, had not their care begun before thou couldst remember or know any thing.

"Now so proud, self-willed, inexorable, then couldst thou only ask by wailing, and move them with thy tears. And they were moved. Their hearts were touched with thy distress; they relieved and watched thy wants before thou knewest thine own necessities, or their kindness. They clothed thee; thou knewest not that thou wast naked: thou askest not for bread; but they fed thee. And ever since—for the particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many surely to be all utterly forgotten—it has been the very principal endeavour, employment, and study of their lives to do service unto thee. If by all these endeavours they can obtain their child's comfort, they arrive at the full accomplishment of their wishes. They have no higher object of their ambition. Be thou but happy, and they are so.

"And now tell me, is not something to be done, I do not now say for thyself, but for them? If it be too much to desire of thee to be good, and wise, and virtuous, and happy for thy own sake; yet be happy for

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theirs. Think that a sober, upright, and, let me add, religious life, besides the blessings it will bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of unfeigned comfort to thy declining parents, and make the heart of the aged sing for joy.

"What shall we say? which of these is happier? the son that maketh a glad father? or the father blessed with such a son?

"Fortunate young man! who hast a heart open so early to virtuous delights, and canst find thy own happiness in returning thy father's blessing upon his own head!

"And happy father! whose years have been prolonged, not, as it often happens, to see his comforts fall from him, one after another, and to become at once old and destitute; but to taste a new pleasure, not to be found among the pleasures of youth, reserved for his age, to reap the harvest of all his cares and labours, in the duty, affection, and felicity of his dear child. His very look bespeaks the inward satisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of his age sit light on him. He feels not the troubles of life: he smiles at the approach of death: sees himself still living and honoured in the memory and the person of his son, his other dearer self; and passes down to the receptacle of all the living, in the fulness of content and joy.

"How unlike to this is the condition of him who has the affliction to be the father of a wicked offspring! Poor, unhappy man! no sorrow is like unto thy sorrow. Diseases and death are blessings, if compared with the anguish of thy heart, when thou seest thy dear children run heedlessly and headlong in the ways of sin, forgetful of their parents' counsel and their own happiness. Unfortunate old man! How often does he wish he had never been born, or had been cut off before he was a father! No reflection is able to afford him consolation.

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He grows old betimes; and the afflictions of age are doubled on his head. In vain are instruments of pleasure brought forth. His soul refuses comfort. Every blessing of life is lost upon him. No success is able to give him joy. His triumphs are like that of David: while his friends, captains, soldiers, were rending the air with shouts of victory—he, poor conqueror, went up, as it is written, to the chamber over the gate and wept: and as he went, thus he said; O, my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

I have introduced this passage, with a hope that gay and thoughtless young men may be properly affected by it; and though they should have no regard for themselves, that they should be led to have pity on their poor parents, and to choose the right way, that they may not cause affliction to him who has often dandled them in his arms, nor to her at whose breast they hung in the sweet and innocent period of their infancy. It is indeed a melancholy consideration that many children, who have been the delight of their parents during the earlier ages, no sooner arrive at maturity, than they prove a scourge and a curse. They hurry those out of the world who brought them into it. They imbitter the old age of those who devoted the health and strength of manhood to their welfare and support. Sad return! to plant the pillow of declining age with thorns!—O have pity, have pity on your father—behold him with tottering step approaching you! With suppliant hands, and tears in his eyes, he begs you—to do what? to be good and happy. O spare him, wipe away his tears: make him happy, be so yourself,—so, when it shall be your turn to be a father, may you never feel the pangs you have already inflicted!

There are parents, indeed, who seem to have little

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concern but for the pecuniary interest or worldly advancement of their children. While their children excel in dress, address, simulation, and dissimulation, they are allowed to be as debauched and immoral as they please. While they possess a poor, mean, and contemptible kind of wisdom, commonly called the knowledge of the world, their parents are perfectly easy; though they should be notoriously guilty of every base artifice, and plunged in the grossest and most unlawful species of sensuality. That poor man, Lord Chesterfield, was one of those parents who are ready to sacrifice their children's honour, conscience, and salvation, for the sake of gaining a little share of the little honours and riches of a world, where not even the highest honours or the most abundant riches are comparable to the possession of an honest heart. That wretched lord seems to have entertained very little natural affection for his offspring. His paternal attention was all avarice and ambition. He would probably have been delighted if his son had been at an early age a debauchee with all the false spirit of a fashionable profligate. He would have thought the spirit which vice displayed a sure prognostic of future eminence. Providence defeated his purpose, and permitted his letters to be exhibited as a loathsome monument of wickedness, vanity, and worldly wisdom. Such wisdom is, indeed, usually folly, even where its effects and consequences are confined to the present period of existence.

Every father, then, and every mother who deserves that tender and venerable appellation, will strenuously endeavour, whatever have been their own errors and vices, to preserve those whom they have introduced into a troublesome world from the foul contagion and pollution of vice. If they have any regard

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for their children, for their country, for themselves, they will use every probable means to rescue the rising generation from profligacy. Selfish motives often prevail when all others are inefficacious. I repeat then, that, for their own sakes, they must guard their offspring from riot, intemperance, and prodigality. If they are misguided by the example of any reformed rake, so as to encourage their children in evil, or even to be negligent of them, they will probably repent in the day of old age, and find poverty, shame, and anguish superadded to the weight of years, and the unavoidable evils of a natural decay.

No. CLVII.

A GOOD HEART NECESSARY TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

By a just dispensation of Providence, it happens that they who are unreasonably selfish, seldom enjoy so much happiness as the generous and contented. Almost all the wicked deviate from the line of rectitude, that they may engross an extraordinary portion of some real or imaginary advantage. Their hearts are agitated in the pursuit of it with the most violent and painful emotions; and their eagerness, apprehensions, and solicitude, poison the enjoyment after they have obtained the possession. The nature of their pleasures is at best, gross, sensual, violent, and of course transitory. They are always dissatisfied, always envious, always malignant. Their souls are bent down to the earth, and destitute of all elevated and heavenly ideas, *cœlestium inanes*. They have not powers of perception for the sublime or refined satisfactions; and are no less insensible to the tranquil delights of innocence and simplicity, than the deaf and blind to the beauty of colours and the melody of music.

To the wicked, and indeed to all who are warmly

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engaged in the vulgar pursuits of the world, the contemplation of rural scenes, and indeed all the pleasures of innocence and simplicity, are perfectly insipid. The odour of flowers, the purling of streams, the song and plumage of birds, the sportive innocence of the lamb, the fidelity of the dog, are incapable of attracting, for one moment, the notice of him whose conscience is uneasy and passions unsubdued. Invite him to a morning walk through a neighbouring wood, and he begs to be excused; for he loves his pillow, and can see no charms in trees. Endeavour to allure him on a vernal evening, when, after a shower, every leaf breathes fragrance and freshness, to saunter with you in the garden, and he pleads an engagement at whist or at the bottle. Bid him listen to the thrush, the blackbird, the nightingale, the woodlark, and he interrupts you by asking the price of stocks, and inquiring whether the West India fleet is arrived. As you walk over the meadows enamelled with cowslips and daisies, he takes no other notice, but inquires who is the owner, how much the land lets for an acre, or what hay and oxen sold for at the last market. He prefers the gloomiest day in November on which pecuniary business is transacted, or a feast celebrated, or a public diversion afforded, to all the delights of the merry month of May. He who is constantly engaged in gratifying his lust, or in gaming, becomes in a short time so very wise, as to consider the study of the works of God in the creation, and the external beauty both of vegetable and animated nature, as little superior to a childish entertainment. How grave his aspect! No Solon ever looked so sapient as he does when he is on the point of making a bet, or insidiously plotting a bargain or an intrigue. One might conclude, from his air of importance, that man was born to shake the dice, to shuffle the cards, to drink claret, and to destroy, by

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debauchery, the innocence of individuals and the peace of families. Ignorant and mistaken wretch! He knows not that purity and simplicity of heart would furnish him with delights, which, while they render his life tranquil and pleasurable, would enable him to resign his soul at death unto the hands of his Maker unpolluted. What stains and filth it usually contracts by an indiscriminate commerce with the world! how comparatively pure it would be amidst the genuine pleasures of a rural and philosophical life!

As a preservative of innocence, and as the means of a most agreeable pastime, the love of birds, flowers, plants, trees, gardens, animals, when it appears in boys, as indeed it usually does, should be encouraged, and in a subordinate degree cultivated. Farewell innocence, when such things cease to be capable of affording pleasure! The heart gradually becomes hardened and corrupted, when its objects are changed to those of a worldly, a sordid, and a sensual nature.

Man may, indeed, be amused in the days of health and vigour with the common pursuits of ordinary life, those of avarice and ambition; but they have too much agitation in them for the feeble powers of old age. Amusements are then required which are gentle, yet healthy; capable of engaging the thoughts, yet requiring no painful or continued exertion. Happy he who has acquired and preserved to that age a taste for simple pleasures. A fine day, a beautiful garden, a flowery field, are to him enjoyments similar in species and degree to the bliss of Elysium. A farm-yard, with all its inhabitants, constitutes a most delightful scene, and furnishes him with a thousand entertaining ideas. The man who can see without pleasure a hen gather her chickens under her wing, or the train of ducklings following their parent into a pond, is like him who has no music in his soul, and who, according to Shake-

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spare, is fit for treasons, murders, every thing that can disgrace and degrade humanity. *Vetabo iisdem sub trabibus, fragilemque mecum solvat phaselum:* I will forbid him, says Horace on another occasion, to be under the same roof with me, or to embark in the same vessel.

Let it operate as an additional motive in stimulating us to preserve our innocence, that with our innocence we preserve our sensibility to the charms of nature. It is indeed one of the rewards of innocence, that it is enabled to taste the purest pleasure which this world can bestow, without the usual consequences of pleasures, remorse and satiety. The man of a bad heart can find no delight but in bad designs and bad actions —nominal joys and real torments. His very amusements are of necessity connected with the injury of others, and with a thousand painful sensations which no language can express. But the mind of the honest, simple, and ingenuous, is gay and enlivened, like some of the southern climates, with a serenity almost perpetual. Let a man who would form an adequate idea on the different states of the good and bad heart, with respect to happiness, compare the climate of Otaheite with that of Terra del Fuego, as described by our British circumnavigators.

No. CLVIII.

ON AFFECTATION OF EXTREME DELICACY AND SENSIBILITY.

Extreme delicacy of sentiment, so esteemed at present, seems to have been unknown in times of manly virtue in remote antiquity. It is certainly a great refinement on human nature; and refinements are never attended to in the earlier ages, when the occupations of war, and the wants of unimproved life, leave little opportunity and less inclination for fanciful enjoyments. Danger and distress require strength of mind,

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and necessarily exclude an attention to those delicate qualities of the mind or body, which, while they please, infallibly enervate.

That tenderness of feeling which is amiable in a state of perfect civilization, is despised as a weakness among unpolished nations. Shocked at the smallest circumstances which are disagreeable, it cannot support the idea of danger and alarm. So far from exercising the severities which are sometimes politically necessary in a rude state, it starts with horror from the sight, and at the description of them. It delights in the calm occupations of rural life, and would gladly resign the spear and the shield for the shepherd's crook and the lover's garland. But in an uninformed community, where constant danger requires constant defence, those dispositions which delight in ease and retirement will be treated with general contempt; and no temper of mind or habit of manners which is despised will be long epidemical.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were the most civilized people on the earth. They, however, were unacquainted with that extreme delicacy of sentiment which is become universally prevalent in modern times. Perhaps some reasonable causes may be assigned. The Stoic philosophy endeavoured to introduce a total apathy, and though it was not embraced in all its rigour by the vulgar, yet it had a sufficient number of votaries to diffuse a general affectation of insensibility. It perhaps originally meant no more than to teach men to govern their affections by the dictates of reason; but as a natural want of feeling produced the same effects as a rational regulation of the passions, real insensibility soon passed among the vulgar for what it had no claim to, a philosophical indifference.

That respectful attention to women, which in modern times is called gallantry, was not usually found

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among the ancients. Women were unjustly considered, in some civilized countries, as inferior beings, whose only duty was to contribute to pleasure and to superintend domestic economy. It was not till the days of chivalry that men showed that desire of pleasing the softer sex which seems to allow them a superiority. This deference to women refines the manners and softens the temper; and it is no wonder that the ancients, who admitted not women to their social conversations, should acquire a roughness of manners incompatible with delicacy of sentiment, and tending in some degree to brutal ferocity.

Men who acted, thought, and spoke, like the ancients, were unquestionably furnished by nature with every feeling in great perfection. But their mode of education contributed rather to harden than to mollify their hearts. Politics and war were the only general objects of pursuit. Ambition, it is well known, renders all other passions subservient to itself; and the youth who had been accustomed to a military discipline, and had endured the hardships of a campaign, though he might yield to the allurements of pleasure, would not have time to cultivate the refinements of delicacy. But the modern soldier, in the present mode of conducting war, is not always compelled to undergo many personal hardships either in the preparation for his profession, or in the exercise of it. Commerce, but little known to many ancient nations, gives the moderns an opportunity of acquiring opulence, without much difficulty or danger; and the infinite numbers who inherit this opulence, have recourse, in order to pass away life with ease, to the various arts of exciting pleasure. The professions of divinity and law leave sufficient time, opportunity, and inclination to most of their professors for the pursuit of every innocent amusement and gratification. The general plan of modern education,

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which, among the liberal, consists of the study of poets and sentimental writers, contributes, perhaps, more than all other causes, to humanise the heart and refine the sentiments; for, at the period when education is commenced, the heart is most susceptible of impressions.

Whatever disposition tends to soften, without weakening the mind, must be cherished; and it must be allowed that an unaffected delicacy of sentiment, on this side the extreme, adds greatly to the happiness of mankind, by diffusing benevolence. It teaches men to feel for others as for themselves; it disposes them to rejoice with the happy, and, by partaking, to increase their pleasure. It frequently excludes the malignant passions, which are the sources of the greatest misery in life. It excites a pleasing sensation in our own breasts, which, if its duration be considered, may be placed among the highest gratifications of sense. The only ill consequence that can be apprehended from it is, that when carried to extremes, it may produce an effeminacy of mind, which may disqualify for vigorous pursuits and manly exertions.

In the most successful course of things, obstacles will impede, and disagreeable circumstances disgust. To bear these without feeling them, is sometimes necessary in the right conduct of life; but he who is tremblingly alive all over, and whose sensibility approaches to soreness, avoids the contest in which he knows he must be hurt. He feels injuries never committed, and resents affronts never intended. Disgusted with men and manners, he either seeks retirement to indulge his melancholy, or weakened by continual chagrin, conducts himself with folly and imprudence, and gives offence to all around him.

How, then, shall we avoid the extreme of a disposition, which, in the due medium, is productive of the

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most salutary consequences? In this excess, as well as all others, reason must be called in to moderate. Sensibility must not be permitted to sink us into such a state of indolence, as effectually represses those manly sentiments, which may very well consist with the most delicate. In the true hero the greatest mildness is commonly united with the greatest fortitude. Tenderness, joined with resolution, forms, indeed, a finished character, to which reason, co-operating with nature, may easily attain by due attention.

The affectation of great sensibility is extremely common. It is, however, as odious as the reality is amiable. It renders a man detestable, and a woman less lovely. Instead of relieving the afflicted, which is the necessary effect of genuine sympathy, a character of this sort flies from misery, to show that it is too delicate to support the sight of distress. The appearance of a toad, or the jolting of a carriage, will cause a paroxysm of fear. It often pretends to a superior share of refinement and philanthropy. But it is remarkable, that this delicacy and tenderness often disappear in solitude, and the pretender to uncommon sensibility is frequently found, in the absence of witnesses, to be uncommonly unfeeling.

To have received a tender heart from the hand of nature, is to have received the means of the highest enjoyment. To have regulated its emotions by the dictates of reason, is to have acted up to the dignity of man, and to have obtained the happiness of which the heart was constituted susceptible. May a temper thus laudable in itself, never be rendered contemptible by affectation, or injurious to its possessor and to others through the want of a proper guidance!

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No. CLIX.

ON TRUE PATIENCE, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM INSENSIBILITY.

However common, and however intense, the evils of human life may be, certain it is, that evils equally great do not affect all men with an equal degree of anguish; and the different manner of sustaining evils, arises from one of these two causes, a natural insensibility, or an adventitious fortitude, acquired by the exertion of Patience.

Apathes, when a school-boy, was not remarkable for quickness of apprehension or brilliancy of wit; but, though his progress was slow, it was sure, and the additional opportunities of study, which he enjoyed by a freedom from those avocations which vivacity and warmth of constitution occasion, made him a tolerably good scholar. The sullenness of his deportment, however, alienated the affections of his teachers; and, upon the slightest misdemeanours, he often underwent the punishment of the rod, which he always bore without a tear and without complaint.

He had not long been at school, before his father and mother died of a contagious fever. Preparatory to the disclosure of so mournful an event to an orphan son, many precautions were taken, many phrases of condolence studied. At length, the master took him aside, and, after several observations on the instability of human affairs, the suddenness of death, the necessity of submission to Providence, and the inefficacy of sorrow, told him that his parents were no more. To this young Apathes replied, by observing, without any visible alteration in his countenance, that he suspected something of that kind had happened, as he had not received his letters at the usual time; but that he had not said any thing on the subject, as he thought his being possessed of a fine fortune by the event, was a

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matter that concerned nobody but himself. "For," says he, "as the death was sudden, there probably was no will, and my father being pretty warm, as they call it, and I being an only son, I think I shall be very well off." Here he was interrupted by his master, who was now desirous of some degree of that grief which he had before been solicitous to prevent—"And are you not affected," said he, "with the loss of the dearest friends you had in the world?"—"Why, Sir," replied the insensible, "you have just now been teaching me to submit to Providence, and telling me we must all die, and the like; and do I not practise your preceipts?" The master was too much astonished to be able to answer, and hastily left the young man; who probably concluded the day with a feast of gingerbread, or a game at marbles.

Soon after he left school, he took it into his head to enter into the state of matrimony. But here let the gentle reader be informed, that he was not induced to submit his neck to the yoke by any of those fine feelings which constitute love. The object of his choice had ten thousand pounds; and he considered that ten thousand pounds would pay for the lady's board. When the little prattlers were arrived at that age when none can behold them without pleasure, they were seized with an unfavourable small-pox, and severally carried from the cradle to the grave. The constant attendance of the mother on this occasion brought on a fever, which, together with a weakness occasioned by an advanced state of pregnancy proved fatal. Then, at last, Apathes was observed to fetch a sigh, and lift up his hands to heaven—at the sight of the undertaker's bill. A thousand misfortunes in business have fallen to his lot, all which he has borne with seeming fortitude. He is now, at length, reduced to that state in which gentlemen choose to take lodgings within the purlieus of

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St. George's Fields: but there is no alteration in his features; he still sings his song, takes his glass, and laughs at those silly mortals who weary themselves in wandering up and down the world without control.

Thus Apathes affords a striking instance of that power of bearing afflictions which arises from natural insensibility. Sophron will give us a better idea of patience as a virtue.

From that period at which the mind begins to think, Sophron was remarkable for a quality which, in children, is called shamefacedness. He could never enter a room full of company without showing his distress, by a violent suffusion of blushes. At school he avoided the commission of faults, rather through fear of shame than of punishment. In short, an exquisite sensibility, at the same time that it gave him the most exalted delight, frequently exposed him to the keenest affliction. Thus, from being acquainted with grief, though a stranger to misfortune, he acquired a habit of bearing evils before any heavy ones befel him.

Sophron was designed for a literary life, which, to the generality of mankind, appears almost exempt from the common attacks of ill-fortune: but if there were no other instances of the peculiar miseries of the student, Sophron alone might evince the groundlessness of such an opinion. From a sanguine temper, he was prone to anticipate success; and, from an enterprising disposition, was little inclined to sit down contented without a considerable share of reputation. Influenced by his love of fame, he ventured to appeal to the public taste, and actually sent into the world a performance of great merit: but as the work wanted some popular attractions, it was soon neglected, and sunk into oblivion.

An evil of this kind, perhaps, the merchant or the

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manufacturer may treat with contempt. They however, who, with the same feelings, have been in the same predicament, will know the anguish which secretly tormented the disconsolate Sophron. This disappointment was the first affliction of his life, and on this he long meditated without intermission. He has not again ventured to publish, and therefore has had no cause of uneasiness from the ingratitude of the many-headed monster: but the evils of his private life have been numerous and afflictive beyond conception. The death of an amiable wife, a constant state of sickness, expectations continually disappointed, have occurred to overwhelm him—but all their efforts have been fruitless. The reflections of philosophy and religion fortify him against every attack, and I never visit him without observing a placid smile of resignation diffused on his countenance. He is sensible of the real weight of every evil, and at the same time sustains it with alacrity. He draws resources from himself in every emergency, and with the nicest feelings bears his misfortunes with indifference.

This is genuine patience; and, though the former may by some be thought a happiness, the latter only can be esteemed a virtue.

Sensibility, with all its inconveniences, is to be cherished by those who understand and wish to maintain the dignity of their nature. To feel for others, disposes us to exercise the amiable virtue of charity; which our religion indispensably requires. It constitutes that enlarged benevolence which philosophy inculcates, and which is indeed comprehended in Christian charity. It is the privilege and ornament of man; and the pain which it causes is abundantly recompensed by that sweet sensation which ever accompanies the exercise of beneficence.

To feel our own misery in a lively manner, is not to

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be deprecated. Affliction softens and improves the heart. Tears, to speak in the style of figure, fertilize the soil in which the virtues grow. And it is the remark of one who understood human nature, that the faculties of the mind, as well as the feelings of the heart, are meliorated by adversity.

But, in order to promote these ends, our sufferings must not be permitted to overwhelm us. We must oppose them with the arms of reason and religion; and, to express the idea in the language of the philosopher, as well as the poet, of nature, every one, while he is compelled to feel his misfortunes like a man, should resolve also to bear them like a man.

No. CLX.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT. [IN A LETTER.]

Eloquence is numbered among those arts which, instead of making a progressive improvement in the course of revolving ages, have greatly receded from their original excellence.

The funeral orations and panegyrics of a few Frenchmen, are the only pieces among the moderns which make pretensions to rhetorical composition in the highest style. These, however, appear very elaborate and unnatural; whether from the barrenness of the subjects, or from the weakness of the orators, is foreign to our purpose to determine. From whatever cause it proceeds, it appears, that ancient eloquence is not restored by those efforts which are allowed to have been most successful.

In England, so generally is a taste for solid argument and close reasoning diffused, that mere flights of imagination, when unsupported by truth and argument, are little attended to. Thus, it has been said, we have no truly classical history of our own country.

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Elaborate collections of facts, proceedings of parliament, and accurate descriptions of our navies and armaments, fill up, with a jejune detail, some of our celebrated histories. A great deal of sagacity has, indeed, been exerted in the adjustment of contested æras, unwearied labour in illustrating obscure passages in our annals, and much patience in the examination of our records. But where, after all, is the painting of a Livy, and the concise elegance of a Sallust?

It is not therefore surprising, that a people who admit not unnecessary embellishments in matters of taste, and who can fall in love with naked truth even when she is at liberty to dress herself in the garb of fancy, should reject mere ornamental flourishes in the important transactions of political debate, and the serious proceedings of a court of judicature.

Thus the eloquence of the ancients is not, perhaps, to be found either in the senate or the forum of Britain.—There is, indeed, a very great degree of merit in many of the harangues spoken in those places, but they came not up to the idea of Grecian or Roman eloquence. The defect, however, is probably not so much owing to the want of ability, as to a voluntary compliance with the taste and genius of the nation.

In the pulpit, indeed, we may find some vestiges of ancient oratory: but, waving at present the inquiry whether or not we resemble the ancients in this point, I shall proceed to transcribe a few observations on pulpit eloquence in general, which I collected not long ago by accident.

One evening last autumn, as I was walking in the fields near the city, to enjoy a little fresh air, I observed a man, somewhat advanced in years, and of a composed aspect, sauntering in the same path with myself,

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seemingly in profound meditation. For a considerable time neither of us chose to commence a conversation; till at length, when a tacit familiarity between us had removed the reserve of strangeness, the old man opened with an usual introductory topic, the serenity of the evening. For my own part, I never refuse to join in one of the most reasonable, as well as most agreeable, pleasures of human life. By degrees, the severity of my companion's countenance brightened up as the conversation grew warm, and he told me he had just been hearing an excellent sermon at an evening lecture, and, as was his usual way, had taken this little turn in the fields to meditate on serious subjects without interruption. I must own I was rather startled at hearing this, apprehending I had fallen into the company of some methodistical enthusiast, who would endeavour to make a proselyte; but, upon farther conversation, I found myself agreeably mistaken. The old man made some reflections, which, as they struck me at the time, I entered among my minutes as soon as I returned home.

"You must know, Sir," said he, "that I am an old-fashion man. I go to church on Wednesdays and Fridays, according to my good old grandmother's directions, who (well I remember it) used always to appoint me the bearer of her large print prayer-book bound in purple morocco. To these early impressions, perhaps, I owe all my oddities; and you will easily imagine what a queer fellow I am, when I inform you, that I put my family to the inconvenience of dining, on Sundays, a full hour sooner than common, for no other reason in the world but that I may do my duty towards my Maker, by going to church in the afternoon. On week days, while my neighbours are at the play-house or the tavern, I can make shift to kill time at an evening lecture; and I often follow a famous

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preacher of a charity sermon with all the ardour with which a favourite player inspires the frequenters of theatrical entertainments. These are my usual diversions, and really, Sir, they have some advantages attending them. In the first place, they are not expensive; for what is a shilling thrown away now and then upon a trifling whim, since every man has his hobby-horse; such as relieving a suffering fellow-creature, or contributing to the education and support of a poor orphan? Secondly, I can go into any church within the Bills of Mortality, without danger of being pushed, and squeezed, and trodden upon, and stifled to death, as sometimes happens to those who follow more fashionable diversions; nay, and I can sit the whole time without being in the least overheated.

"Now, Sir, as I have constantly attended to various sorts of public eloquence, I suppose I may pretend, without vanity, to be some judge of it. Do not, however, expect that I shall bring proofs of the justness of my remarks from your Aristotles, your Tullies, or your Quintilians; for I am a plain common man, and if I have any sense, God knows it is only plain common sense.

"Let me premise, that I shall now and then make use of the usual terms of division and subdivision. Such, for instance, as those edifying little words, First, secondly, thirdly, to conclude, to come to my next head, and the like. Consider, Sir, I have been long used to this style, and naturally run into it.

"Of preachers, I shall reckon four kinds; the Fine Man, the Pretty Preacher, the Good Textman, and the Humdrum.

"First then of the first (forgive my sermonical style), namely, of the Fine Man:

"A stentorophonic voice is the fundamental excellence of your Fine Man, and a powerful excellence

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it is. No sooner has the Fine Man uttered the pathetic and significant phrase, 'to conclude,' than I have seen the whole row of matrons, in the aisle, wiping their eyes. The next qualification is flexibility of joints and muscles. From this excellence arise those vilent contortions of the body, that wringing of the hands, beating of the breast, rolling of the eyes, foaming of the mouth, and other symptoms of madness, which never fail to gain the applause of the plebeian congregation. The next—but what am I about, Sir? In truth, I cannot recollect any real excellencies; as for sense, learning, argument, these are not to be expected in your Fine Man: but then the want of these is abundantly supplied by noise, nonsense, and grimace.

"To come to my second head. Secondly, then, as was before laid down, we treat of the PRETTY PREACHER.

"The Pretty Preacher is an imitator of the Fine Man. As a copy, he is sometimes fainter than the original. He whines, he sobs, he roars, but roars like any nightingale, as Shakespeare has it. A soft effeminate voice, a pretty face (for look ye, Sir, a pretty face is a more powerful persuasive than the arguments of a Chillingworth), and a white handkerchief, are the constituent parts of a Pretty Preacher.

"These two sorts of Preachers are complete masters of the passions, without in the least addressing the understanding. In truth, I cannot help comparing them to a fiddler of old time I remember to have heard of at school, who made stocks and stones dance minuets, and rivers run the wrong way, and played a hundred such pranks merely by sound of the fiddle-strings. Just in the same manner a Fine Man, and a Pretty Preacher, can force the tear from the eye, and the shilling from the inmost recesses of the pocket, by

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dint of sound, which, in this case, is very seldom the echo of sense.

"To come to my third head. Thirdly, then, the GOOD TEXTMAN lays down good plain rules of morality, and confirms every precept by a quotation from holy writ. The grace of elocution he never aims at. Rhetorical flourishes, new remarks, or beautiful language are not to be required of him. In short, the intelligent part of the congregation will seldom find their understandings enlightened, or their fancy amused, by him; but the plain sober-minded Christian, provided he can distinguish what the preacher says, may carry away something for his edification.

"To conclude with my fourth and last head. The HUMDRUM seems to consider preaching and praying as a kind of work, which if he performs so as to get his wages, he is satisfied. He reads the liturgy as he would read a newspaper. In his preaching, he endeavours neither to please, to strike, nor to convince, but thinks the duty sufficiently well done, if it is but done according to the rubrick, and at the established seasons. To give him his due, he commonly preaches the best divinity in the language; for as he is too lazy to compose, he has nothing to do but to make choice of the most celebrated compositions of others. He, however, murders every sentence he reads. For the most part, he chooses doctrinal rather than practical discourses; but the misfortune is, that while he is making the mysteries as clear as the sun at noonday, his audience is commonly asleep as fast as a church. In a word, you may form some idea of this kind of a preacher, by taking a view of Hogarth's print of the sleepy congregation, where there is a Humdrum holding forth, so as effectually to infuse peace and quietness into the minds of his hearers."

Here the old man's avocations obliged him to con-

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clude the conversation, with expressing a wish, "That men of virtue and learning, as the clergy generally are, would not suffer the effect of their excellent prayers and discourses, which, if well delivered, might reform the world, to be in a great measure lost through indifference or affectation."

The several descriptions of preachers in this essay were of well-known public characters at the time it was written. They have long ago been silenced by death: and I know not that they have, in the present times, any imitators.

No. CLXI.

ON THE SUPERIOR VALUE OF SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

A Dialogue of the Dead between Cicero and Lord Chesterfield.

Esse quam videri.——SALL.

Cicero. MISTAKE me not. I know how to value the sweet courtesies of life. Affability, attention, decorum of behaviour, if they have not been ranked by philosophers among the virtues, are certainly related to them, and have a powerful influence in promoting social happiness. I have recommended them, as well as yourself. But I contend, and no sophistry shall prevail upon me to give up this point, that, to be truly amiable, they must proceed from goodness of heart.—Assumed by the artful to serve the purposes of private interest, they degenerate to contemptible grimace, and detestable hypocrisy.

Chest. Excuse me, my dear Cicero; I cannot enter farther into the controversy at present. I have a hundred engagements at least; and see yonder my little elegant French Contesse. I promised her and myself the pleasure of a promenade. Pleasant walking enough in these elysian groves. So much good company too, that if it were not that the canaille are apt to be troublesome, I should not much regret the distance from the Thuilleries.——But adieu, mon cher

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ami, for I see Madame **** is joining the party. Adieu, adieu!

Cic. Contemptible fop!

Chest. Ah! what do I hear? Recollect that I am a man of honour, unused to the pity or the insults of an upstart, a *novus homo.* But perhaps your exclamation was not meant of me—if so, why—

Cic. I am as little inclined to insult as to flatter you. Your levity excited my indignation; but my compassion for the degeneracy of human nature, exhibited in your instance, absorbs my contempt.

Chest. I could be a little angry, but as *bienséance* forbids it, I will be a philosopher for once.—A-pro-pos, pray how do you reconcile your—what shall I call it—your unsmooth address to those rules of decorum, that gentleness of manners, of which you say you know and teach the propriety as well as myself?

Cic. To confess the truth, I will not advance the external embellishment of manners to extreme refinement. Ornamental education, or an attention to the graces, has a connexion with effeminacy. In acquiring the gentleman, I would not lose the spirit of a man. There is a gracefulness in a manly character, a beauty in an open and ingenuous disposition, which all the professed teachers of the arts of pleasing know not how to communicate.

Chest. You and I lived in a state of manners, as different as the periods at which we lived were distant. You Romans, pardon me, my dear, you Romans—had a little of the brute in you. Come, come, I must overlook it. You were obliged to court plebeians for their suffrages; and if *similis simili gaudet,* it must be owned, that the greatest of you were secure of their favour. Why, Beau Nash would have handed your Catos and Brutuses out of the ball-room, if they had shown their unmannerly heads in it; and my Lord

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Modish, animated with the conscious merit of the largest or smallest buckles in the room, according to the temporary ton, would have laughed Pompey the Great out of countenance. Oh, Cicero, had you lived in a modern European court, you would have caught a degree of that undescribable grace, which is not only the ornament, but may be the substitute of all those laboured attainments which fools call solid merit. But it was not your good fortune, and I make allowances.

Cic. The vivacity you have acquired in studying the writings and the manners of the degenerate Gauls, has led you to set too high a value on qualifications which dazzle the lively perceptions with a momentary blaze, and to depreciate that kind of worth which can neither be obtained nor understood without serious attention and sometimes painful efforts. But I will not contend with you on the propriety or impropriety of the outward modes which delight fops and coxcombs. I will not spend arguments in proving that gold is more valuable than tinsel, though it glitters less. But I must censure you, and with an asperity too, which, perhaps, your graces may not approve, for recommending vice as graceful, in your memorable letters to your son.

Chest. That the great Cicero should know so little of the world, really surprises me. A little libertinism, my dear, that's all; how can one be a gentleman without a little libertinism?

Cic. I ever thought that to be a gentleman, it was requisite to be a moral man. And surely you, who might have enjoyed the benefit of a light to direct you, which I wanted, were blameable in omitting religion and virtue in your system.

Chest. What! superstitious too!—You have not then conversed with your superior, the philosopher of

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Ferney. I thank Heaven, I was born in the same age with that great luminary. Prejudice had else, perhaps, chained me in the thraldom of my great grandmother. These are enlightened days; and I find I have contributed something to the general illumination, by my posthumous letters.

Cic. Boast not of them. Remember you were a father.

Chest. And did I not endeavour most effectually to serve my son, by pointing out the qualifications necessary to a foreign ambassador, for which department I always designed him? Few fathers have taken more pains to accomplish a son than myself. There was nothing I did not condescend to point out to him.

Cic. True: your condescension was great indeed. You were the pander of your son. You not only taught him the mean arts of dissimulation, the petty tricks which degrade nobility; but you corrupted his principles, fomented his passions, and even pointed out objects for their gratification. You might have left the task of teaching him fashionable vice to a vicious world. Example, and the corrupt affections of human nature, will ever be capable of accomplishing this unnatural purpose. But a parent, the guardian appointed by nature for an uninstructed offspring introduced into a dangerous world, who himself takes upon him the office of seduction, is a monster indeed. I also had a son. I was tenderly solicitous for the right conduct of his education. I intrusted him, indeed, to Cratippus at Athens; but, like you, I could not help transmitting instructions dictated by paternal love. Those instructions are contained in my book of Offices; a book which has ever been cited by the world as a proof to what a height the morality of the heathens was advanced without the light of revelation. I own I feel a conscious pride in it; not on account of the

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ability which it may display, but for the principles it teaches, and the good, I flatter myself, it has diffused. You did not, indeed, intend your instructions for the world; but as you give them to a son you loved, it may be concluded that you thought them true wisdom, and withheld them only because they were contrary to the professions of the unenlightened. They have been generally read, and tend to introduce the manners, vices, and frivolous habits of the nation you admired—to your own manly nation, who, of all others, once approached most nearly to the noble simplicity of the Romans.

Chest. Spare me, Cicero. I have never been accustomed to the rough conversation of an old Roman. I feel myself little in his company. I seem to shrink in his noble presence. I never felt my insignificance so forcibly as now. French courtiers and French philosophers, of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, have been my models; and amid the dissipation of pleasure, and the hurry of affected vivacity, I never considered the gracefulness of virtue, and the beauty of an open, sincere, and manly character.*

No. CLXII.

CONJECTURES ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORIENTAL AND SEPTENTRIONAL POETRY, OR THE POETRY OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.

THE productions of the mind, like those of the earth, are found to have different degrees of vigour and beauty in different climates. In the more northern regions, where the nerves are braced by cold, those

* This Essay, like many others in these volumes, was occasioned by the great popularity of Chesterfield's Letters at the time it was written. They tended, in the authors's opinion, to the destruction of the national morals, and particularly to the corruption of youth; for which reason they were attacked by him, in various modes, and with a zeal which, at least, was honest.

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works are commonest, and attain to the greatest perfection, which proceed from the exertion of the rational powers, and the painful efforts of the judgment. The sciences, like the hardy pine, flourish on the bleakest mountains; while the works of taste and fancy seem to shrink from the rude blast, with all the tenderness of the sensitive plant, and to require the genial warmth of a nearer sun to give them their full luxuriance and maturity. Aristotle, Newton, and Locke, were the natives and inhabitants of temperate regions. Experience, indeed, seems to prove, that all the mental powers exist in their greatest degree of strength and perfection among those who inhabit that part of the globe which lies between the tropic of Cancer and the Arctic circle. No complete and celebrated work of genius was ever produced in the torrid zone.

But whether the diversity of genius in countries near or remoter from the sun proceeds from natural causes, or from the adventitious circumstances of different modes of education, different views, and a different spirit of emulation, it is certain that the productions of Eastern and Northern genius are dissimilar. Some ingenious critics have indeed pointed out a resemblance between the Gothic and Oriental poetry, in the wild enthusiasm of an irregular imagination. And they have accounted for it, by supposing, with great probability, that in an emigration of the Asiatics into Scandinavia, the Eastern people brought with them their national spirit of poetry, and communicated it to the tribes with whom they united. The resemblance, therefore, in works produced since this union, does not prove that the Northern and Oriental genius were originally alike. Those productions of either which are allowed to be original, and to bear no marks of imitation, have perhaps no other resemblance than that which commonly proceeds from the similar operation of similar faculties, independently of climate.

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It seems, indeed, that a cause may be assigned for this diversity of Northern and Oriental productions, without attributing it to an essential difference in the original constitution of the human understanding. The imagination is strongly affected by surrounding objects, and acquires vigour by frequent exercise. He who is placed in a climate where the serenity of the weather constantly presents him with blue skies, luxuriant plantations, and sunny prospects, will find his imagination the strongest of his faculties; and, in the expression of his sentiments, will abound in allusions to natural objects, in similes, and in the most lively metaphors. His imagination will be his distinguishing excellence, because it will be more exercised than any other of his faculties: and all the powers both of body and mind are known to acquire vigour by habitual exertion. He, on the other hand, whose lot it is to exist in a less favoured part of the globe, who is driven by the inclemency of his climate to warm roofs, and, instead of basking in the sunshine amidst all the combined beauties of nature, flies for refuge from the cold to the blazing hearth, will seek, in the exercise of his reason, those resources which he cannot find in the actual employment of his imagination. Good sense and just reasoning will therefore predominate in his productions. Even in the wildest of his flights, a methodical plan, the result of thought and reflection, will appear, on examination, to restrain the irregularities of licentious fancy.

Consistently with this theory we find Oriental poetry exhibiting the most picturesque scenes of nature, and illustrating every moral sentiment or argumentative assertion by similes, not indeed exact in the resemblance, but sufficiently analogous to strike and gratify the imagination. Strong imagery, animated sentiment, warmth and vivacity of expression, all of which are the effects of a lively fancy, are its constant characteristics.

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The accuracy of logic, and the subtilty of metaphysics, are of a nature too frigid to influence the Oriental writer. He feels not the beauty of demonstration, he pursues not a chain of argument, and he submits to the force of persuasion, rather from the dictates of his feelings than from rational conviction. He endeavours to influence his reader in the same manner, and commonly excites an emotion so violent, as to produce a more powerful effect on common minds, than would be experienced even from conclusive argumentation.

No. CXLIII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE POETRY OF THE PROPHETS, OF ISAIAH IN PARTICULAR, AND ON THE BEAUTIES OF BIBLICAL POETRY IN GENERAL.

The Sibylline oracles owed their solemn air, their credit, and their power over the fancy, to the dark and difficult style in which they were composed. Virgil's Pollio, supposed to have been written from a hint taken from the books of the Sibyls, is the most admired of his Eclogues; and a great share of the pleasure derived from the perusal of it, is justly attributed to the judgment of the poet, in leaving more to be understood than meets the ear. The forebodings of Cassandra were not attended to by the Trojans; and perhaps the true reason was, that they were not completely understood. The witches in Macbeth add to the terrible solemnity of prophetical incantation, by its darkness and uncertainty.

Obscurity seems to have been the characteristic of all writings pretending to prediction. It certainly increased their poetical merit, though, among the Greeks and Romans, it was probably no more than a studied artifice to evade, if the event did not correspond with the prophecy, the imputation of imposture. Thus were the oracles of Apollo delivered in ambiguous

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phrases, which frequently admitted a contrary, and always a doubtful, interpretation.

Without this artful proceeding, the authority of the heathen religion had not been so long maintained. Frequent failure, without any subterfuge to preserve the prophetical power unsuspected, would soon have silenced the Delphic priestess. But while the ænigmatical prediction preserved the dignity of the oracle, by inspiring awe, it contributed to its security by facilitating evasion.

The Sacred Prophecies have that obscurity which distinguishes this species of writing. The final cause of it, however, was to exercise the faith and sagacity of mankind. The beauty which it adds to the poetry cannot be supposed to arise from design or skill in poetry as an art, but is the necessary result of natural propriety. And none but the unbeliever will suppose that, like the oracles at Delphi, they admitted a doubtful, in order to admit a double construction.

The prophecy of Isaiah abounds in the beauties of Oriental poetry. The translation in our Bible is a literal one, and though it may be found inaccurate by a Lowth or a Kennicot, will, I believe, hardly admit of improvement in force, simplicity, and animation. It does honour to the feelings of the old translators, who, though they have performed their task with so much spirit, had nothing else in view but fidelity. To refinement and taste they made no pretensions; and that their work is so well executed must have been owing to the excellence of their natural sentiment and taste. We have several literal translations of the ancient poets into English prose, which are in request among school-boys. In these we find no remains of that beauty which has been celebrated in every age from its first production. Few of these are rendered so faithfully, word for word, from their ori-

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ginals, as the Scriptures, which, notwithstanding this disadvantage, are the sublimest and most interesting books in the English language.

That they are thus excellent, it may, indeed be said, is not to be wondered at. They proceeded from that real inspiration to which the celebrated writers of antiquity only pretended. And if the enthusiasm, which the imaginary assistance of a fabulous deity excited, could diffuse that captivating spirit over the works of a mortal poet which has charmed every succeeding age, it will be an obvious inference, that the genuine afflatus of the great Author of the universe must produce a work of eminent and unquestionable beauty. Such reasoning is plausible; but, in the present case, it may not be improper to observe, that the divine inspiration operated intentionally no farther than in dictating truth of representation, and in laying open scenes of futurity; and that the beauties discoverable in the medium of composition by which those primary ends are accomplished, are effects but collateral and subordinate. Considered as such, every man of sentiment feels them of a superior kind, and if he judges by the criterion of his undissembled feelings, must acknowledge, that though they are sometimes resembled in Homer, they are seldom equalled and never excelled. Take a view of the poetical beauties merely as the productions of Isaiah, a very ancient poet of Judæa, and his writings will surely claim the attention of a man of letters, as much as those of the native of Smyrna or of Ascra.

They who pretend to an exemption from prejudice, evince the futility of their pretensions, when they attribute the general admiration of the Scriptures, as compositions, to opinions formed in their favour in the earlier period of infancy. The truth is, the prejudices which they have unreasonably adopted against the

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doctrines derived from those ancient books extend themselves to the style and sentiment: but surely, exclusively of the religious tendency, and of the arguments for the authenticity of the books, they claim a great degree of veneration from their antiquity, and justly excite the attention of criticism, as curious specimens of Oriental composition.

It might, indeed, have been expected, from the general taste, which at present prevails for the remains of ancient English poetry, that those works, which justly boast a higher antiquity than any of the productions of North or South Britain, would have been particularly regarded. But, while the ballad of a minstrel, beautiful perhaps, and well worth preserving, has been recovered from its dust and committed to memory, the family Bible has been suffered to lie unopened, or has been perused by many only with a view to painful improvement, without an idea of the possibility of deriving from it the elegant pleasures of literary entertainment.

Yet even the vulgar sensibly feel the force of beauties which they know not how to point out; and are affected with a very strong sense of pleasure, while they are reading the Scriptures solely from motives of duty, and a desire of edification. In truth, among those whose natural taste is not corrupted by false refinement, which perhaps is the most numerous, though not the most distinguished part of the community, the Bible is read as affording all the delight of pleasing poetry and history; and it may, therefore, justly be called the most popular book in the English language.

But all readers, whether vulgar or refined, who feel and acknowledge the admirable touches of nature and simplicity which are observable in many parts of those writings, will perhaps receive additional satisfaction,

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when they discover that their taste is often conformable to classical ideas of literary excellence.

There is, in the present age, a very numerous tribe of readers, who have formed their taste and sentiments from the writings of the philosophers on the continent, and from the sceptical sophistry of our own countrymen. They are known to make pretensions to a very uncommon degree of refinement in their judgment of composition, and to condemn every work, whatever marks it may bear of a strong though uncultivated genius, which wants the last polish of delicacy and correctness, and has nothing similar to those modern productions, with which alone they have been conversant. With all their boasted comprehension of mind, they seem to want ideas, which may operate as principles in forming a just opinion of those works which were composed before the invention of systematic rules, and before native sentiment was superseded by the feeble, though elegant, feelings, of which we boast in a very advanced state of civilization. Under these unfavourable prepossessions, the Bible appears to them as an assemblage of grossness and vulgarisms, which, therefore, without determining upon the authenticity of it, they avoid reading, apprehending that they can derive no pleasure from it, and that they may possibly corrupt their style, and catch inelegance.

With these it would be a valuable point gained, for their own sakes as well as for society, if they could be prevailed on so far to lay aside their prejudices as to open the book and judge of it from what they feel and remark on a fair examination. If they could once be induced to read it with avidity, from an expectation of literary amusement, they could scarcely fail of receiving at the same time a more important benefit.

In an age like the present, when all orders are, in some degree, attached to letters, he certainly renders

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great service to religion, and consequently to society, who unites taste with theology, and excites the attention of the careless and sceptical to those books, of which a sense of duty enjoins the perusal, by setting their beauties in a new or a stronger light.

And that this opinion of the peculiar beauties of Isaiah is not singular, if it is necessary to appeal to any other proof than the common feelings of mankind, is evident from the judgment of a popular writer of our own, who, as he was indisputably a poet himself, will be allowed, by the most rigid critics, to be a competent judge of poetry. Mr. Pope's Messiah is one of the best known and most esteemed of his shorter works; but that it derived its chief merit from Isaiah there can be no doubt, and the admirable poet felt a pleasure to acknowledge. He neglected not the opportunity which this pastoral afforded, of forming a comparison between Isaiah and Virgil, in a few parallel passages, fairly displayed by a translation equally literal, and to exhibit the Oriental poet to great advantage. Of this animated prophet's poetry, there are many parodies, paraphrases, and imitations, all which, at the same time that they evince how difficult his excellencies are to be equalled, are proofs that he has been generally admired as a poet.

But, after all, the reader must judge of the sacred writings for himself. If he attends to what he feels, and lays aside prepossession, his judgment will be favourable and just. To remove a single prejudice, which can prevent the universal acceptance of books of universal concern, is to contribute greatly to the general happiness. An attempt to render the prophetic writers objects of particular attention, in an age when our most ingenious theologists are employed in illustrating their meaning at a lecture wisely established for that purpose, must, at least, have the merit of being well-timed.

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And surely every one who wishes to promote the desirable coalition of taste with piety, must accept, with gratitude, the labours of Lowth, whose lectures on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, and observations on Isaiah, have displayed, in biblical literature, the unexpected charms of classic elegance.

No. CLXIV.

ON PREACHING, AND SERMON-WRITERS.

Few institutions can contribute more to preserve civilization, and promote moral and intellectual improvement among all ranks of people, than the establishment of public lectures in every part of the kingdom, to be periodically repeated after a short interval.

Such is the light in which are to be considered the discourses appointed by the wisdom of the church, to be every where read on the recurrence of the seventh day. By these the meanest and the most illiterate are enabled to hear moral and philosophical treatises on every thing that concerns their several duties, without expense and without the trouble of solicitation.

And whatever is urged by men who are ill-affected to all religious institutions, there is no doubt but that great political, as well as moral, benefit is derived to society from a practice thus universal. But it is a misfortune long ago lamented, that men are incapable of estimating the real value of advantages, till experience has shown what it is to want them.

It is certainly true, that since the acquisition of books has been facilitated by their numbers, oral instruction is rendered less necessary. But though books are easily procured, yet, even in this age of information, there are thousands in the lower classes who cannot read at all, or at least with much advantage. Besides, it is a well-known truth, that the same precepts inculcated by a living instructor, adorned by a proper oratory, and enforced by a serious and authoritative

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manner, produce a powerful effect, not to be experienced in solitary retirement. There is likewise a sympathy communicated in a numerous audience, which attaches the mind more strongly to the subject.

The obvious utility of discourses from the pulpit is proved by the decisions of experience. For, notwithstanding the complaints against the levity and profaneness of the age, churches are still frequented with apparent pleasure. And to be placed in a situation where a good preacher resides, is by many esteemed a very essential requisite to an agreeable retreat from the cares and business of life.

For excellent preachers this nation has been long distinguished; excellent, not so much in the talents of an orator, as in the composition of discourses. With an uncultivated voice, in an uncouth manner, accompanied with awkward attitudes, they have delivered harangues scarcely excelled in the schools of Athens. As the French have exhibited their characteristic levity even in their boasted sermons, so the English have displayed their natural solidity.

The sermons of the last century are indeed too long for the attention of modern indolence, but they abound with beauty that would reward it. Jeremy Taylor possessed an invention profusely fertile; a warm, rich, lively imagination; a profound knowledge of authors sacred and profane, poetical, historical, philosophical. He has embellished his sermons with citations from them, and has interwoven their gold into the rich tissue of his own composition.

Nearly at the same time with Taylor arose Isaac Barrow, a mighty genius, whose ardour was capable of accomplishing all it undertook. The tide of his eloquence flows with smooth yet irresistible rapidity. He treats his subject with almost mathematical precision, and never leaves it till he has exhausted it. It

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has been said, that a late most popular orator of the House of Lords asserted, that he owed much of the fire and rapidity of his eloquence to the study of Barrow.

His editor, Tillotson, is more popular. His merit is unquestionably great, and his fame has been extended to very exalted heights by the praises of Addison. He writes with sufficient judgment and perspicuity; but there are those, among whom I am one, who venture to suggest that he has been too much celebrated as a model of fine composition. They allow him every praise as a most excellent divine; but when they consider him as a writer, they think his periods might have been shorter, and his rhythm more harmonious. They are often wearied with dulness, and disgusted with coarseness and inelegance.

Archbishop Sharpe has been justly celebrated for the force, the purity, the perspicuity of his style, and the ardent flow of unaffected piety.

Of a very different character from these, South has obtained a great and deserved reputation. Wit was his talent, yet he often reaches sublimity. He is, however, one of those authors who, in some respects, is to be admired and not imitated. To excite a laugh from the pulpit, is to inspire the hearer with a levity of temper ill-adapted to the indulgence of devotional feelings. The taste of the age in which South flourished gave countenance to pulpit jocularity. But though it is true that the lovers of comedy have found their taste gratified in the perusal of South's sermons, yet the man of the most serious mind also will discover much solid argument, many most judicious observations, many fine expressions, and a great deal of true eloquence, intermixed occasionally with a few epigrams in prose.

The sagacious Samuel Clarke pretended not to wit.

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He affected not the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric. He rarely reaches the sublime, or aims at the pathetic; but in a clear, manly, flowing style, he delivers the most important doctrines, confirmed on every occasion by well-applied passages from Scripture. If he was not a shining orator, according to the ideas of rhetoricians, he was a very agreeable as well as useful, convincing, powerful preacher. He was not perfectly orthodox in his opinions; a circumstance which has lowered his character among many. Certain it is, that he would have done more good in the world, had he confined his labours to practical divinity. Speculative and polemical divinity commonly diffuses scepticism and acrimony, without contributing much to moral and religious reformation.

The sermons that have been preached at Boyle's Lectures are among the best argued in the language. They were the laboured productions of the most ingenious men. But perhaps the whole collection never did so much good among the mass of the people as a single practical discourse of Barrow.

Bishop Atterbury was a polite writer. His sermons probably owed some of their fame, among his contemporaries, who have lavishly applauded him, to his mode of delivery in the pulpit; for the Tatler says it was such as would have been approved by a Longinus and Demosthenes. I cannot profess any great admiration either of the man or the preacher. He seems to have introduced the very judicious method of addressing the undersanding in the beginning of the sermon, and the passions at the close. It was, however, a rule of ancient rhetoric.

Rogers possessed an eloquence, nervous, simple, persuasive, and beautiful. An unstudied elegance marks his style. He seems to have attained to that nice judgment, which adapted the same discourse to a

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rustic, a city, and academical congregation. In a professed eulogium it is indeed allowable to exaggerate; yet what Burton, his professed panegyrist, has advanced is confirmed by perusing the sermons of Rogers. They are perspicuous, solid, and written with remarkable ease. They are among the best in the language.

Seed has obtained a great and deserved popularity. With a rich and sportive fancy he combined a solid judgment. Unlike the generality of those writers who affect to be flowery, he abounds in fruit also, in sound argument, and in just remarks on human life. A severe critic would condemn him for a profusion of embellishment; but, I know not how it is, he had the skill to apply abundance of ornament without causing satiety.

Such are the more popular of our English sermon-writers, the models of those many divines who, with very great merit, possess not the reputation of remarkable originality. To enumerate them all were an endless task; for of no books in the English language has there been so unceasing a succession as of sermons; and to speak of living writers with freedom, is too often like thrusting a hand into the nest of the hornet, especially since journals have degenerated so much as to have become mere instruments of political party.

Of late there have appeared publications of sermons addressed to persons of particular ages or descriptions. Though some of them exhibited a highly florid eloquence, and were received with great applause, yet they were too much ornamented, and, like many kinds of food, possessed a sweetness which delights for a moment, but soon terminates in loathing. They amused the imagination, and sometimes touched the heart; but they left to the understanding little employment. Perhaps the sermons of Fordyce are of this description.

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Sermons which came forth with less eclat, will stand a better chance of descending to posterity. Such are those of Sherlock, Secker, and Jortin. The happiness of mankind is concerned in the preservation of works such as theirs, while those of the frothy declaimer are daily dropping unregretted into the gulf of oblivion.

It is to be lamented, that the glaring and meretricious embellishments of the superficial writer are more commonly imitated by young preachers, than the chaster beauties of the sound divine. Fine language, as it is called, with a few hackneyed sentiments and addresses to the passions, often constitute the whole merit of discourses preached before the most numerous congregations in the metropolis, especially, it is said, in the chapels of fashion.

Extemporary preaching is one of the most effectual means of obtaining popularity. It always pleases the vulgar: probably because it conveys the idea of immediate inspiration. It is true also, that by pleasing the vulgar, it is enabled to affect them. But yet there are many reasons to prevent its general reception among the judicious. It may raise the passions, it may communicate a momentary fit of devotion; but from its hasty production it can seldom be correct or solid. It is indeed, seldom attempted but by the bold and superficial. The greatest divines have not been presumptuous enough to lay before their audience the effusions of the moment, but have usually bestowed much time and care in the composition of a single sermon. We are indeed informed that Clarke sometimes preached without written notes; but the number of his printed sermons is a proof that this was not his general practice. They who possess the abilities of a Clarke may, however, safely venture to produce an unpremeditated harangue. But they also would do right to recollect, that the orations even of Demos-

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thenes himself smelled of the lamp, and that the mushroom is of quick growth, while the fruit and the forest tree require time to become valuable.

Against those who prepare their discourses, a general complaint has been made, that sermons are become in these days merely moral essays. There was a time when a passage from Scripture, well introduced, was esteemed a flower far surpassing every ornament of rhetoric. It is now sometimes avoided as an ugly patch, that chequers with deformity the glossy but flimsy contexture.

A professed Christian preacher, addressing a professed Christian audience, should remember, that, however beautiful his discourse, if it is no more than a moral discourse, he may preach it, and they may hear it, and yet both continue unconverted heathens. Morality should always be taught under the sanction of Christianity.

Every congregation of real Christians wishes to find all morality deduced from Scripture, and confirmed by it. Moral precepts, thus adorned, come from the pulpit as from an oracle. Scriptural language is not inelegant: but if it were, a preacher should let motives of duty exclude ostentation. In truth, he never appears to greater advantage, than when he seems to forget his own excellence, and to lose sight of himself in the earnestness of his endeavours to promote the welfare of his audience, whose souls, according to the language of our church, are committed to his care.

No. CLXV.

ON THE NEGLECT OF ANCIENT AUTHORS. [IN A LETTER.]

THOUGH it be true, as you remark, that in the present times learning is universally admired, and the character of a man of taste and letters is affected not only in colleges, but in polite circles; not only by the

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philosopher, but by the beau and the coxcomb; yet is it to be lamented, that there seems to remain no general relish for solid erudition, very little veneration for the inimitable productions of Greece and Rome, and but a slight attention to the more abstruse sciences and abstracted disquisitions. We read for pleasure, for amusement, for mere pastime, which dry argument and connected reasoning cannot always furnish. Light, airy, superficial compositions, without fatiguing the intellect, flatter the imagination; and for the sake of this empty satisfaction, to this trivial kind of reading is our time devoted, without regard to improvement of morals, or enlargement of understanding. Local, personal, and temporary topics, attract and engross the attention of multitudes.

From neglecting the writers of antiquity, we become ignorant of their beauties, vainly suppose that excellence is confined to modern authors, and that the ancients can be admired only by prejudice and bigotry. Even they who are really sensible of the excellence of the classics, are willing, because they have neglected the study of them, to depreciate their merits, and to extenuate the infamy of their ignorance, by pretending that the knowledge of them is not desirable. Some there are who, though they profess an admiration of the ancients, read them not in the originals, because they think it possible, without the trouble of loading their memories with dead languages, to taste all their beauties through the medium of translations.

To those who affirm that an admiration of the ancients is founded on prejudice, it is sufficient to reply, that the unanimous applause of whole nations, for many ages, cannot, with the appearence of reason, be attributed to implicit attachment or ignorant wonder, or, in a word, to prejudice.

As for those who condemn the Greek and Latin authors because they will not take the pains to under-

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stand them, they are to be censured for their indolence, and despised for their artifice: and they who read a Horace or a Virgil, in an English translation, however well performed, must be told, that they will form no better idea of the inexpressible graces of these poets, than they would receive of the masterpieces of a Raphael or a Guido, from the daubing of a mere copyist. In the transfusion from one language to another, as it has been frequently remarked, the spirit evaporates, and seldom any thing remains but a *caput mortuum*.

The matter of an ancient and original may be preserved, the ideas justly exhibited, the historical part accurately represented; but the manner, the style, the beauties of diction, which constitute more than half the excellence of the classics, can seldom be transferred to a modern language. They who read translations only, are like those who view the figures of a beautiful piece of tapestry on the wrong side.

I must then earnestly recommend it to you, if you wish to taste the genuine sweets of the classic streams, to drink at the fountain, and be not so weak as to believe those who tell you authoritatively, that the learning which they have the misfortune not to possess, is of no value. They really are not, and cannot possibly be, competent judges in this matter. The question when before them is *Coram non judice*.

No. CLXVI.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF A COUNTRY TOWN. [IN A LETTER.]

Romæ rus optas, absentem rusticus urbem
Tollis ad astra. HOR.

SIR,

MY father had a lucrative place in the customs; but as his family was large, he was unable to leave us fortunes, and contented himself with placing us in such

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situations in the world as would give us an opportunity of acquiring a decent provision, if we should not be wanting to ourselves. It was my lot, after having received a tincture of classical education, to be put apprentice to a genteel business at the west end of the town. As soon as I was out of my time, I set up for myself; and though I cannot boast that I ever was in a very great way, yet, by attention and frugality, I had accumulated, at the age of forty, a sum sufficient to enable me to live in a comfortable manner, without the anxiety and confinement of trade. A handsome legacy from a relation of my wife, at once determined me, in my long-meditated intention, to sell off at prime cost, and retire.

I had always entertained a great idea of the happiness of living in the country. It was, indeed, natural in one who had dwelt near forty years in a dusty warehouse, amidst the dirt, smoke, and noise of Houndsditch; and who seldom made an excursion beyond the cake-house at Hoxton, or the bowling-green at Hackney.

One morning, while I was revolving in my mind, the idea of retirement, I happened to cast my eye on an advertisement in the newspaper, in which a house, garden, and grounds, in a market-town, about five and thirty miles from London, were announced to be let at fifty pounds a-year. This appeared to me too advantageous a bargain to be neglected; for, you must know, I gave a hundred a-year for my shop, the area of which was no more than three yards by four; and here were twenty acres of land, and a mansion that would contain my house ten times over, to be let for half the money. There was no time to be lost: I shut up shop, took my wife and family down, and settled immediately.

As I did not go into the country on an economical

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plan, I was resolved to launch out a little, and live, as I could very well afford it, in a moderately genteel style. I set up a post-chaise, kept several horses, and two livery servants. This appearance placed me on a level with the best families in the neighbourhood, and accordingly I was visited by all who claimed the rank of gentlefolks.

But, alas! I found not in this place that happiness which I expected. I have been convinced by experience, that a market-town is not a proper situation for the retirement of those who wish to taste the pleasures of rural life, and to pass the evening of their days in a state of tranquillity. That you may judge of the impropriety of such a retreat, I shall give you an account of my reception in it, and of several circumstances, which render it less fit for the enjoyment of those peaceful and domestic pleasures, which every one who retires from business expects, than the noisiest street in the metropolis of the empire.

The first visits were paid us from motives of curiosity, under the pretence of politeness. Our persons, our address, our characters, were examined with all the severity of criticism, but without the candour of benevolence. The various remarks that were made, furnished, with improvements and embellishments, an inexhaustible fund of conversation for the next three months.

With respect to myself, at the first weekly club after our arrival, the 'squire, the attorney, the apothecary, and two or three gentlemen sots who lived upon their means, as it is called, sat in judgment upon my character. After much debate, in which an equal portion of candour and discernment were displayed, I was found guilty of being a cockney, of keeping a poor table, and yet, at the same time, living above my fortune; and lastly, of having a great deal of pride

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that little became me. The result was, that though they should condescend to call upon me, as long as my pipe of excellent port lasted, yet I was not to be admitted a member of their jolly society, being a Londoner.

It is true, I visit and am visited; but as I really do not take much pleasure in a drinking-bout; as I am not very well skilled in farming or fox-hunting; and, from a tenderness of constitution, am obliged to be abstemious in the articles of eating and drinking, we commonly have more form in our meetings than cordiality. To assemble together for the sake of liberal and manly conversation, is held insipid. My sons are never at home; and my daughters, who have been taught to set a high value on mental accomplishments, neither give nor receive much satisfaction in the company of those who think it the very summit of education, to have learned at a boarding-school, to dance and play a minuet.

The envy, the jealousy, and the impertinence of the lower sort of people is not less conspicuous and troublesome than that of their superiors. If we send to buy any thing, we are forced to pay something more than any body else, because we are the rich newcomers. If my cow happens to break into neighbour Hodge's field, she is pounded without notice, because, forsooth, she is the Londoner's cow. If we walk down the town, all the doors and windows are flung open, and crowded with spectators, just as it is in London at my lord-mayor's show. My poor wife and daughters' dress are criticised and pulled to pieces with unrelenting severity.

Whenever my servants go to any shop, a set of gossips make a point of meeting them, in order to ask what I had for dinner, how much small-beer is consumed by us in a week, and a thousand similar ques-

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tions. No little art is made use of to persuade them that I am stingy, and that my place is the worst in the town; though to my certain knowledge, I am so far imposed upon, being a stranger, as that I am forced to pay a third more wages than any body else in the neighbourhood.

Nothing passes in my house which does not become matter of general conversation. If a cousin or an old acquaintance comes from London to spend a few days with me, no pains are spared to learn of the servants who and what he is; and if my servants know nothing about him, it is suggested that he is in some low trade, a mere mechanic in his best suit of clothes. If he should take an evening walk with my daughters, unaccompanied with me or my wife, he is going to be married to one of them directly. His name, his age, his origin, are immediately divulged; the fortunes on both sides ascertained, and the day fixed.

I can never buy nor sell a horse, a cow, or a pig, nor change a servant, but I am called behind my back a fool for my pains, and it is hinted that I do not know what I am about; and indeed, how should I, since I am a cit? If I make an alteration in my garden, dig a ditch, mend a pig-stye, or thatch a hovel, my taste, my judgment, my prudence, are called in question, and it is charitably wished that I do not bring my noble to nine-pence, and my nine-pence to nothing. In short, hardly a mouse can stir in any part of the house, from the parlour to the scullery, but the barber, the chandler's-shop keeper, the landlady at the ale-house, the mantua-maker, and the char-woman, find means to get a knowledge of it, for the entertainment of their customers and employers.

Till I lived in this place, I never thought myself of such consequence as to merit general attention. In London, my next-door neighbour neither knew nor

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cared what passed in my parlour and kitchen. I can, however, easily account for this difference. In a market-town, of no great opulence or extent, there are not objects enough to divert the idle; no plays, no auctions, no fine shops, no show-glasses. Scarcely any amusements for sots, gossips, and old maids, but thinking and talking on the affairs and families of other people. The settlement of a stranger in their town is food to them for years. They have been too long used to the natives to find any novelty in their concerns, and perhaps have been induced to regard them with that partiality of long acquaintance or of relationship which precludes malevolence. But strangers are lawful game; and the cruelty of little minds is found to take a pleasure in detracting from their characters, and defeating, by false and malignant representations, those schemes of happiness with which they flattered themselves in retirement.

Sick of such impertinence, and disgusted with the ill-nature of all around me, I have resolved to quit the market-town, and have just hired a house delightfully situated in a distant village. It is the paternal habitation of a man, who, having hopes of rising at court, chooses to leave his charming retreat, for a small dark house in one of the dismal lanes that lead into the Strand. I shall have no near neighbours, but the vicar, who is not only a learned, virtuous, religious, and benevolent, but also an agreeable man. His family, all of whom have that elegance of mind which results from a taste for letters, will be much with mine. They have already formed a reciprocal attachment. And I hope to have found at last, in this place, that happiness which I vainly sought in a more frequented situation. Of this I am confident, that the honest simplicity of the rustics, if it is not agreeable, is far less disgusting, than the pert, affected, ill-natured airs and

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manners of the little half-bred gentry in little country-towns.

The beauties of nature untouched by art, an air sweet as it blows over the blossomed vale, peaceful hours, social cheerfulness, domestic joys, rural dignity —these are mine in my village retreat. Nor do I regret the loss of formal visits, and that wretched intercourse with little and unemployed minds, which, while it wore away life in insipidity, exposed me to the envenomed shafts of unmerited calumny.

No. CLXVII.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON EPISTOLARY WRITERS.

When a writer has distinguished himself in his studied performances, and pleased us in those works which he intended for our perusal, we become interested in all that concerns him, and wish to be acquainted with his ideas, as they flowed, without any view to their publication, in the open communications of a private and friendly correspondence. Beautiful minds, like beautiful bodies, appear graceful in an undress. The awe which they inspire, when surrounded with all their dignity, is sometimes more striking than pleasing; but we feel ourselves relieved when admitted to their familiarity. We love to retire behind the scenes, and to observe the undisguised appearance of those who please us when industriously decorated for public exhibition. From this cause it has arisen, that the private letters of great men have been always read with peculiar avidity.

The Greeks, remarkable as they were for diversity of composition, have not left many models in the epistolary style. There is no doubt but that Xenophon excelled in it, though most of the letters which he wrote have either not been collected or preserved. Those of Socrates, Antisthenes, Aristippus, Xenophon,

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Æschines, and Philo, have never been popular. Those which pass under the name of Aristænetus are of a taste less resembling the Attic than the Oriental. The descriptions in them are poetically luxuriant, but the language is not pure, nor the style simple.

The epistles of Phalaris have been much read by the learned; but though, if genuine, they are curious monuments of the genius of the tyrant, they are not very good specimens of epistolary composition. They are better known from the violent dispute they occasioned between Bentley and Boyle, than from their intrinsic merit. In some part of that famous controversy, Bentley says, with his usual acrimony, that Boyle, who had published an edition of Phalaris, had made a bad book worse by a bad edition of it.

Cicero, the world's great model in the oratorical and philosophical, is no less eminent in the epistolary style. He rivalled his great patterns the Greeks in eloquence and philosophy; and he excelled them in his letters. His letters have a grace peculiar to themselves. Many of his other works are professedly imitations, but conducted with that art which characterises genius, and appropriates all it handles. His letters were not studied, they were the effusions of the moment, they arose from the occasion, and please from their air of truth and unaffected propriety. Whether business, pleasure, politics, philosophy, or conjugal and paternal affection are their subjects, they are equally excellent and always pleasing. He wrote them without the least view of their coming to the public eye, and to this circumstance they owe a great share of their merit, their freedom from affectation. Near a thousand of them remain, and furnish abundance of historical information, at the same time that they exhibit the best models for this species of writing. They are thought not to appear to the best advantage in the

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specimens which Dr. Middleton has inserted in his Life of Cicero. No one was better able to do them justice than that great biographer; but it is said he committed the task of translation to some inferior writer.

There was an age when the letters of Pliny were preferred to those of Cicero. They have, indeed, the glitter of an artificial polish, but they want the more captivating grace of natural beauty. They were studied, and they exhibit the appearance of study. He who delights in elaborate and highly finished composition, will be gratified in the perusal of Pliny; but he will at the same time regret, if he has a taste for propriety, that this labour was not bestowed where it would have been better placed. In a philosophical discourse, or a formal harangue, we expect the interposition of art; but, in an epistle, we are more pleased with the genuine effusions of nature, than with the efforts of ingenuity.

Seneca's moral essays have little right to the name of Epistles, with which he distinguished them. They are little more than a collection of common-place observations abounding in wit and ingenious turns, but not abounding in elegance and grace. His faults, indeed, are sweet, as Quintilian said; but it is a sweetness which cloys, and can scarcely please any but a vitiated appetite.

After the Latin had ceased to be a living language, many excellent books of letters were written in it. It was the universal language of learning. The literati of different nations, the rude languages of which would not repay the labour of cultivation, wisely chose to communicate their thoughts as well as they could in the pure dialect of the court of Augustus. Some of the earliest of these are disgraced by the barbarism of the times. But Petrarch shines amidst the surround-

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ing obscurity. True genius like his, was sure to display its lustre, though it laboured under the disadvantage of a prevailing corruption of taste. His language, however, is by no means a model, and his style is barbarous.

Politian had just pretensions to true genius. There is a warmth and a vigour in his poetry, which fully proves him to have possessed the *mens divinior*. His epistles are elegant, but, like those of Pliny, whom he imitated, they are formal and affected. Upon the whole, they are not unpleasing, and abound with beautiful language.

Erasmus, a name that shines forth with peculiar glory in the annals of literature, justly possesses the first rank among the modern epistolary writers. His style, indeed, is not purely Ciceronian, though it displays many of its graces. It is entirely his own, yet it often rises to a level with classical excellence. He was not so scrupulously exact in his taste, as to reject a barbarous and Gothic expression, if it conveyed his ideas precisely. But he had the skill to use it with such propriety, that it acquired, in his writings, a grace and dignity. No man was better acquainted with the works of Cicero, and no man, after his emancipation from a few prejudices formed in his youth, entertained a higher opinion of Cicero's beauties, or knew better how to imitate them. But he despised the sect of Ciceronians, who would scarcely admit a particle that was not to be found in their favourite author. He ridiculed them with admirable wit and eloquence, in his dialogue Ciceronianus; nor would he give countenance, by any of his writings, to so ridiculous an affectation. More studious of copiousness and variety of matter, than of scrupulously imitating any model, he selects the most expressive word he can find in the language, and, by a judicious composition, ren-

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ders it agreeable and proper. With all their defects in point of purity of language, his letters are uncommonly entertaining; and have that spirit which genius can always display, but which laborious dulness vainly imitates. There is a fund of Lucianic humour in all his more familiar writings; in his colloquies it is most conspicuous; but it is also very remarkable in many of his epistles. Had he lived in an age when polite learning was more generally encouraged and cultivated, his productions would have been models of elegance, not inferior to the boasted reliques of antiquity. But, unfortunately, he was engaged in the unpleasing disputes of pedantic theologists; and, instead of treading the flowery paths of Greek and Roman literature, for which he was adapted by nature, was contented to toil through the thorny mazes of a barbarous, perplexed, and irrational system of divinity. His liberal mind soon perceived, and as soon avowed, the absurdity of the received modes and opinions; but he had too great a veneration for genuine Christianity, to neglect those studies which his profession, as a Christian and an ecclesiastic, naturally led him to cultivate. He saw, and in great measure avoided, the inelegancies which abounded in the theological writings of his times; but it was not easy always to be upon his guard against them: and his mind retained the tincture, as waters are polluted with the impurities through which they flow.

I omit a great number of epistolary writers, who had little merit of their own, and who derived all their fame from a servile imitation of Cicero. Among these is Paulus Manutius, who is said to have often spent a month in writing a single letter. We see in him, in consequence of this scrupulous attention, an elegant and truly Ciceronian phraseology; but we observe none of the native graces of natural and unaffected composition.

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Our neighbours, the French, have arrogated great merit as epistolary writers. Their genius and their language appear to be well adapted to excel in it. But some of the most celebrated writers have renounced the advantages which nature gave them, and spoiled all the beauties of sentiment and vivacity, by an unseasonable profusion of wit. Balzac wearies his reader with the constant recurrence of laboured ingenuity.

Voiture abounds with beautiful thoughts, expressed with great elegance. The language of compliment disgusts, in other writers, by its unmeaning sameness and formality. He has given it the grace of delicacy. But even he, though indisputably a fine writer, is justly censured by Bohours, for thoughts which the critic calls false and affected. Like many others, he has neglected real beauties for artificial ornaments.

Our own countrymen have honourably distinguished themselves in this, as well as in every other kind of elegant composition. The epistolary style of Swift is thought, by many, to excel all others. It has purity, ease, expression, and force. Pope's letters are lively and delicate. Shenstone's are much read; but it may be doubted whether they have that peculiar and striking excellence which should place them among the classics of our country.

The late lord Chesterfield, though justly decried as a moral instructor, is admired as a letter-writer of peculiar elegance. No man more closely and successfully imitated the French in every circumstance. Like them, he writes with perspicuity, vivacity, and that gracefulness which is sure to please, and which he so strenuously recommends. He is himself, in this instance, a proof of the efficacy of the graces; for, with all his merit, he was certainly superficial, and yet obtained a degree of fame which more solid writers have seldom possessed. Lady Wortley Montague, Cowper, and many recent letter-writers, have shown an excel-

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lence in epistolary composition scarcely excelled by Cicero and Pliny.

Much has been said on the epistolary style; as if any one style could be appropriated to the great variety of subjects which are treated of in letters. Ease, it is true, should distinguish familiar letters, written on the common affairs of life; because the mind is usually at ease while they are composed. But, even in these, there incidentally arises a topic which requires elevated expression, and an inverted construction. Not to raise the style on these occasions, is to write unnaturally; for nature teaches us to express animated emotions of every kind in animated language.

The impassioned lover writes unnaturally, if he writes with the ease of Sevigné. The dependant writes unnaturally to a superior, in the style of familiarity. The suppliant writes unnaturally, if he rejects the figures dictated by distress. Conversation admits of every style but the poetic, and what are letters but written conversation? The great rule is, to follow nature, and to avoid a stiff, formal, and affected manner both in sentiment and expression.

No. CLXVIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF EXERCISE, AMUSEMENTS, AND AN ATTENTION TO HEALTH, IN A LIFE OF STUDY. [IN A LETTER.]

I HAPPENED accidentally to meet a fellow-collegian, with whom, before we were separated by the caprice of fortune, I was intimately acquainted. Surely it is he, said I; but, alas, how changed! pale, emaciated, with hollow and lack-lustre eye, is this my old school-fellow, whose ruddy cheeks and cheerful countenance displayed health and happiness? What can have reduced my poor friend to so wretched a condition? Intemperance, or some dreadful disease, must have stolen

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away his youth, and hurried him to a premature old age.

While I was thus reflecting, he passed me without taking notice. He, indeed, seemed to be so entirely wrapped up in contemplation as to pay no regard to external objects. My curiosity and friendship were too much interested, to suffer him to leave me without giving some account of himself. I soon overtook him, and he no sooner recognized me, and perceived my surprise at his appearance, than he proceeded to assign the causes of it.

"You know, my friend," said he, "my first and strongest passion was for literary fame. Flattered by my friends, and encouraged at my school, I persuaded myself I was advancing in the career of glory; and, with all the ardour of enthusiasm, devoted every moment of my life to the pursuit of learning. Puerile diversions had no charms for me. A book was my sole delight, my constant companion, and was never laid aside but while my mind was employed in composition. During my residence at the university, I spent the time which my companions allotted to rural amusements, in examining those repositories of ancient learning, the public libraries. I saw, indeed, the futility of scholastic logic, but a desire to qualify myself for the public exercises, led me to the attentive perusal of Wallis and Sanderson. The same motive engaged me in dreary subtleties of metaphysics. Such studies engrossed the greater part of my first three years, with little advantage, and no pleasure. The fatigue would have been intolerable had it not sometimes been alleviated by the charms of poetry. My favourite Virgil and Horace, and every polite writer of modern times, afforded, in their turn, an agreeable recreation. My exercises were honourably distinguished; and praise to an ingenuous mind is the best reward of learned labours.

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"With my character for application and sobriety (not to boast of my attainments) I found no difficulty in obtaining orders. The head of my house procured me a curacy in a small country town. Thither I went, not without my collection of books, the use of which I would not have foregone for a mitre. I had no other wish than to improve myself in learning, and to perform the duty of an ecclesiastic with decency and devotion. I was happy in the prospect of spending my time uninterrupted by the intrusion of my academical friends, whom youth and high spirits would often lead to a noisy behaviour, little consistent with meditation. My want of experience concealed from me the difficulty of pursuing the line of conduct which inclination pointed out. I found it was necessary to my good reception among my parishioners, to give up the greatest part of the day to a participation in their amusements. In vain was it that I laboured to excel in the pulpit. There was not a man in the place who had an idea of the dignity or utility of literary excellence, and who would not most cordially have hated even a Clarke or a Tillotson, if he had never been in at the death of a hare, or drank his bottle at the club. The parson, in their idea of his character, was a jolly fellow in black, who was to lead a careless life all the week, and preach against it on Sundays. I could not bring myself to take a delight in a fox-chase; and, though good-nature prevented me from showing my dislike, I could never meet any of the hunters with satisfaction. The little pleasure I took in the only society that was to be obtained, still farther confirmed me in my recluse mode of life. When my resolution appeared unchangeable, I was suffered to live as I pleased, with the character of an odd but inoffensive man. In this unmolested retreat I found time to go through a complete course of ecclesiastical history. I acquired a sufficient knowledge of the oriental lan-

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guages to enable me to read the Polyglott. I wrote a great number of sermons and theological treatises, and made many corrections in the vulgar translation of the Bible. So wholly engrossed was I by my darling pursuits, that I seldom left my chamber. In vain did the vernal sun invite. The music of a pack of hounds, which frequently passed my window, had no charms in my ears. The rural sports of every kind were tedious and insipid. To my books I returned from every trifling avocation with redoubled pleasure, and endeavoured to repay the loss of an hour in the day, by devoting a great portion of the night to study.

"It is really true, that my chief motive for application was a love of learning. Yet I will be so ingenuous as to own, I sometimes formed a wish that my small share of merit, if I had any, might attract the notice of my superiors. There is a time of life when fame alone appears to be an inadequate reward of great labour. It flatters that natural love of distinction which we all possess, but it furnishes no convenience in the time of want and infirmity. There was in the neighbourhood a little living of one hundred a year, with a house and garden, in a style of decent elegance which becomes a scholar. The patron was the 'squire of the next parish, who had always treated me with singular respect. I was foolish enough to suppose his regard for my character would induce him to bestow his benefice on me; but I found, when it became vacant, he had staked and lost the next presentation at a game at whist with a clerical fox-hunter.

"I was at last taken notice of by my diocesan. He had heard of my indefatigable diligence, and recommended me to an eminent publisher, as a proper person to make an index to a very voluminous work. I eagerly undertook the task, with a view to please so great a man, and finished it in less than a year and a

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half. The books were printed on a small letter, and this work did my eyes an injury which they will never recover; but it must be owned, on the other hand, that the bookseller gave me in return a bank-note of ten pounds. An index-author seldom acquires reputation. He is indeed seldom known; but if he happens to be discovered, the accuracy of his work is, in the opinion of many, a kind of disgrace to him. It seems to argue a degree of phlegmatic dulness, and of patient labour, rarely in the power of genius. It will not therefore be thought wonderful that this laborious work produced no other effects than the injury of my eyes, and the payment of my tailor's bill. My diocesan forgot both me and the employment in which he had engaged me. Indeed, I could not look to him for preferment; for all his nephews and cousins went into orders, under his sanction, for the purpose of taking the livings in his gift as they fell. And the little perpetual curacy in the neighbourhood, worth eighty pounds a year, which I had fixed my heart upon, was given to a borough-monger's natural son, at the immediate request of the then prime minister.

"In this curacy I still continue, without any prospect of change, unless when blindness, occasioned by intemperate study, or the infirmities of age, shall oblige me to resign. I am not of a discontented disposition, nor do I relate my condition with a design to criminate others for their neglect of me. Preferment I never sought by those methods which the world agrees to be the best suited to procure it. I have therefore no right to complain of the want of that which I did not rightly pursue. My motive for this communication is to prevent others from incurring misery by a too great attachment to objects laudable in themselves. I can never discountenance an attention to literature. I still love it. I still venerate those that have excelled in it.

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But a sincere regard for many of the most amiable and useful of my species, induces me to remind them, that they have a body which requires a great share of their attention, and that no satisfaction arising from study can ultimately counterbalance the loss of sight, and that long train of nervous diseases superinduced by unremitted application.

"I mean not to excite your sympathy; nor will I exaggerate my evils by description. My appearance has already convinced you that I am the victim of disease. Nor will you hesitate to believe that the stone, the gout, the hypocondria, which have worn out my tender frame, were derived from an attention unrelieved by the usual and necessary relaxations.—Had I been wise enough to have mounted a horse during the intervals of reading, and to have entered into cheerful company at the close of a thoughtful day, I might have prolonged my favourite enjoyments to a happy old age.

"I am philosopher enough to bear with patience a condition which I cannot alter; yet I sometimes think, though without the least degree of envy, that an old school-fellow of mine, of a very different turn from myself, is far happier. I remember I used to laugh at him, and think him very silly, when at the time we were at the university together he would miss an ingenious lecture for the sake of a ride, and spent the five shillings with which I should have bought a book in the hire of a horse. It is true, indeed, that he needed not, and ought not, to have neglected his mental improvement, because he had many opportunities of relaxation after the hours of study were elapsed. Yet, if I judge of his conduct by the apparent effects of it at present, it appears to me in a less blameable light than it used to do. He is now at the age of sixty-three, for he was somewhat older than myself, and

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retains all the vigour and alertness of a young man. His countenance is hale, his limbs muscular, and he reads the service and the newspaper, the only things he does read, without spectacles.

"He set out in life as friendless as myself. He engaged in a curacy in a sporting country. His love of field-diversions soon introduced him to what was called the best company. He possessed the external graces of behaviour, and at the same time was deeply skilled in horse-flesh, and had Bracken's Farriery by heart. Such merits could not long pass unrewarded. A baronet in the neighbourhood grew fond of him, and introduced him to his family; one of whom was an only daughter of no great personal or mental accomplishments. My friend, however, admired her fortune, and found no difficulty in obtaining her hand. The living on which he now resides was part of her portion, and though of no great value, yet it furnishes him with a pretty snug sporting-box. He commonly reads prayers in his boots and spurs, while his hunter stands neighing in the porch till honest Moses has twanged through his nose the final and joyful Amen. It is true, my old friend has no taste, no learning, no refinement, but he has the use of his eyes, and a never-ceasing flow of spirits; he can walk as well as ever, possesses an excellent digestion, and plenty to furnish it with constant employment.

"But his example is not to be followed, since he has run into an extreme more culpable, though less pernicious to himself, than mine is to me. Far happier and wiser the philosophical Euphranor, who, with the warmest affection for learning, restrained it, as he has every other inordinate attachment, by the rules of prudence; and by paying all the attention which nature and reason require to his body and to his mind, has

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advanced the condition of both to a high degree of attainable perfection.

"In me you see a body and a mind, worn out in professional labours without obtaining a sufficiency to lay my weary limbs in the grave. I wanted a friend throughout life; but the parish will afford me at last all I now require, a quiet and obscure sepulture. Farewell."

No. CLXIX.

ON THE MERITS OF COWLEY AS A POET.

THE biographers of our English authors have sometimes fallen into a mistake which renders the truth of their story suspected. Their accounts are truly panegyrics. The hero of their tales, like the lover in the romance, is adorned with every good quality. Not content to relate facts with impartiality, they extenuate what is culpable, and exaggerate all that can admit of commendation. In truth, they who have exhibited the lives of our authors, have usually been the editors of their works; and either from a real and natural fondness for those things on which they have bestowed care, or from the less laudable motive of promoting the circulation of a book in which they were interested, have spoken too highly even of those who merit applause. But it is not wonderful if the trader represents his own merchandise as the best in the market-place.

It was the lot of Cowley to be handed down to posterity by a writer who was famous in his day for eloquence. Dr. Spratt probably undertook the office of Cowley's biographer, with a design to display his talents in a species of oratory which the Roman rhetoricians called the demonstrative. He discharged it well as an artist, but failed as an accurate historian. By placing Cowley in the first rank of poets, he has in

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effect degraded him from the subaltern station which he had else preserved unmolested. Dr. Spratt owed much of his fame to the poet who had compared his style to the gentle and majestic current of the Thames; and returned the compliment, perhaps from other motives than those of gratitude; for the higher Cowley was exalted, the greater honour was reflected on those whom he had commended. Of Spratt, the celebrated bishop of Rochester, lord Orrery has said, few men have gained a greater character for elegance and correctness, and few men have deserved it less. And of the poet whom he praised, the great Dryden has with diffidence remarked, that somewhat of the purity of English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers, in one word, somewhat of finer turn and more lyrical verse is yet wanting.

Whatever are his defects, no poet has been more liberally praised than Cowley. Lord Clarendon has said, he made a flight above all men: Addison, in his account of the English poets, that he improved upon the Theban bard: the duke of Buckingham writes upon his tombstone, that he was the English Pindar, the Horace, the Virgil, the Delight, the Glory of his time. And, with respect to the harshness of his numbers, the eloquent Spratt tells us, that if his verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as one would have them, it was his choice, and not his fault.

Such is the flattery of editors! and such the applause lavished on a writer who is now seldom read. That he could ever be esteemed as a Pindaric poet, is a curious literary phenomenon. He totally mistook his own genius, when he thought of imitating Pindar. He totally mistook the genius of Pindar, when he thought his own conceits and numbers bore the least resemblance to the wild, but harmonious sublimity of the Theban. He neglected even those forms, the strophe,

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the antistrophe, and epode, which imitative dulness can easily copy. Sublime imagery, vehement pathos, poetic fire, which constitute the essence of the Pindaric ode, are incompatible with witty points, accurate antitheses, and vulgar expression. All these imply the coolness of deliberate composition, or the meanness of a little mind; both of them most repugnant to the truly Pindaric ode, in which all is rapturous and noble. Wit of any kind would be improperly displayed in such composition; but, to increase the absurdity, the wit of Cowley is often false.

If the end of poetry is to please, harmony of verse is essential to poetry, for, without it, poetry cannot please. It is not possible, that any whose ear has been attuned to the melody of good composition, should read a single ode of Cowley without being shocked with discord. There is often nothing left but the jingle at the end, to distinguish some poems of Cowley renowned for their sublimity from affected prose. Such poetry may justly incur the ridiculous title of prose run mad.

Yet is there sometimes interwoven in his poems a purple patch, as Horace calls it; a fine expression, a truly poetical thought, an harmonious couplet; but it occurs not often enough to repay the reader for the toilsome task of wading through a tedious assemblage of disproportionate and discordant stanzas. Of such consist his Pindarics; which, though they procured him the greatest share of his reputation, deserved it least. Many of his other poems, if we consider the rude state of versification, and the bad taste of the times, have great merit; and had he made Tibullus his model, instead of Pindar, his claim to the first rank of elegiac poets had not been called in question. The tenderness of love, and the soft language of complaint, were adapted to his genius. But he chose to

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tread in the footsteps of Alcæus, as he says himself, who, according to the Hallicarnassian, combined the μεγαλαφυες καὶ ηδυ, the grand and the sweet.

That Cowley had a taste for Latin poetry, and wrote in it with elegance, the well-known epitaph upon himself, upon his retirement, and one most admirable imitation of Horace, are full proofs. But surely his rhetorical biographer makes use of the figure hyperbole, when he affirms that Cowley has excelled the Romans themselves. He was inferior, as a Latin poet, to many a writer of less fame in the Musæ Anglicanæ. But still he had great merit; and I must confess I have read some of his Latin verses with more pleasure than any of his English afforded. The good ones are few; the bad and the barbarous greatly predominate.

But, after all the honours that have been accumulated on his name as a poet, his great merit consisted in prosaic composition. In this department he is an elegant, a pleasing, a judicious writer. His love of retirement and contemplation qualified him for a moralist; and it is much to be lamented, that he did not devote a greater part of his time to a kind of writing which appeared natural to him, and in which he excelled. The language of his heart shines forth in the little he has left us, and we cannot but love it.

Much more of that language would have descended to posterity, if his friends, from a mistaken opinion of propriety, had not suppressed his private letters. Dr. Spratt and Mr. Clifford were avowedly possessed of many; and the very reason assigned by the biographer for their suppression, should have operated in their publication. The letters that pass between particular friends, says Spratt, if they are written as they ought to be, that is, I suppose, in an artless manner, can scarcely ever be fit to see the light. How great an

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injury would polite learning have sustained, if the friends of Cicero had thought like Spratt and Clifford!

They would better have consulted the reputation of the poet, had they pronounced the Pindaries unfit to see the light. Editors, in general, would act more honourably, in exhibiting only the best of their author's productions, than in praising, as well as publishing, all that has fallen from his pen. But, in truth, to have left out any part of his poems, would, in that age, have been an unpardonable omission; for who should dare to mutilate a Pindar?

Time, the great arbiter of reputation, has already begun to strip the poet of his borrowed honours. Bishop Hurd, a critic whose genius and judgment keep pace with each other, and who illuminates every subject on which he treats, has allotted Cowley his just species of praise, and has given the world, in a judicious selection of his works, all that they possessed of real value.

Of these, the prose forms a principal part. The prose of Cowley is written in a style sufficiently flowing to prove that he was not destitute of a musical ear; a circumstance which countenances the opinion of those who maintain that he affected a rugged style. Was it a compliance with the taste of the age that induced him to affect deformity? Unfortunate compliance with a deplorable taste! He, as well as they whom he imitated, Donne and Johnson, were unquestionably possessed of great learning and ingenuity; but they all neglected the graces of composition, and will therefore soon be numbered among those once celebrated writers, whose utility now consists in filling a vacancy on the upper shelf of some dusty and deserted library.

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No. CLXX.

CURSORY AND GENERAL HINTS ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.

The scarcity of books, a few centuries ago, was the principal obstacle to the advancement of learning. The multitude of them is become, in the present age, scarcely less injurious to its interests, by distracting the student in his choice, and by diffusing an incorrect, a frivolous, and undistinguishing taste.

To read all books on all subjects would require an uninterrupted attention during the longest life even of an antediluvian. To read only the most celebrated, written in a few languages, is an employment sufficient to fill up a great portion of the time allotted us in this sublunary state. For the sake then of saving time, and of directing the judgment of the inexperienced, it becomes a useful attempt to suggest some general hints which may tend to facilitate selection.

One rule of the greatest consequence is, to read only, or chiefly, the original treatises in all the various departments of science and of literature. Nearly the same space of time, though not the same degree of attention, is necessary to peruse the faint copies of imitative industry, as would appropriate to the student the solid productions of native genius. This rule is more particularly to be observed on the first entrance on study. The foundation must be laid deep, and formed of solid materials. The superstructure will often admit slight and superficial appendages. When we have studied the fine relics of those who have lived before us, we may derive much pleasure from attending to the additional labours of contemporary genius. But to begin with these is to found, like the fool recorded in the Gospel, an edifice in the sand.

It were no less presumptuous than superfluous to address directions in the choice of authors to the learned. But we may venture, without arrogance, to point out

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a few to the notice of the young and ingenious pupil with a design to abbreviate or facilitate them.

He who is entering on the study of divinity, will naturally devote his first attention to the Scriptures. The original language of the Old Testament is often unknown even to the learned and ingenious; and notwithstanding what some critics and professors have, as it were, officially observed on the subject, the neglect of it, though culpable, is seldom attended with much disadvantage. Many divines in the highest stations have been totally unacquainted with Hebrew. But the knowledge of Greek is indispensably necessary, if theology is pursued as a profession.

The prophetical parts will, perhaps, claim the greatest share of a professed student's attention in the perusal of the Old Testament. Dr. Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies will be a sufficient guide for subsequent application to them. To illustrate the New Testament, it will be proper to have recourse to Percy's Key to it, to Trapp's Notes, to Locke on the Epistles, and to Mede on the Apocalypse. With these assistances the student, who is not deficient in natural ability, will make a competent proficiency, even though he should totally neglect those myriads of treatises which have rendered the body of divinity, as it is called, enormous beyond comprehension.

The student in physic is commonly introduced to the knowledge of it by a public lecturer, who superintends or at least directs, his course of reading. Natural and experimental science, in all their ramifications, are in some degree requisite to his further advancement. These alone will, indeed, render him ingenious in his closet, but will avail little at the bed-side without other aid. To these must be added a most accurate observation of the human frame in all its vicissitudes of health, disease, and convalescence. The reading of

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cases accurately delineated, is found to be the best succedaneum, where actual practice and observation are precluded. System, without ocular observation and actual practice, is in general insufficient and delusive.

To the professed lawyer, scarcely any book on the subject of law is uninteresting or useless. But he who pursues the study merely as an accomplishment in a comprehensive plan of education, will find all the necessary lights in the volumes of Grotius, Puffendorf, Taylor, Burn, and Blackstone.

He who wishes to gain a competent knowledge of grammar, may succeed in his attempt, without loading his memory with the works of Priscian, or of those thousands who have toiled in this circumscribed province. Let him, after having studied gramatically the elements of Latin and Greek in the common grammars, digest the Minerva of Sanctius, the Hermes of Harris, and the Introduction of Lowth.

The art of rhetoric, delivered in a technical form, never yet formed an orator. It is one of those artificial assistances of genius, which genius wants not, and of which dulness can little avail itself. But as there are excellent books written on it, the general scholar must pay it his attention. Let him then read Cicero on the Orator, and Quinctilian's Institutes, and he need not trouble himself with those meagre treatises which give a hard name to the natural modes of expression, and teach us that, like Hudibras, we cannot open our mouths but out there flies a trope.

He who is impelled by necessity or inclination to attend to logic, may with propriety neglect all the rubbish of the schools, and, next to the Stagyrite himself, study only the logical introductions of Sanderson, Wallis, Watts, or Aldrich.

If the barren field of metaphysics is ever capable of repaying the toil of cultivation, it can only be when

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the attention is confined to such authors as Locke and Hucheson.

If ethics are to be considered in the systematical method of a science, the moral philosophy of Hucheson may be recommended as one of the clearest, the most elegant, and the concisest treatises that have appeared upon them. Aristotle's Ethics are admirable, but there is no translation of them which I can recommend. Tully's Offices and Paley's Moral Philosophy may be read with great advantage. But the numerous writers who have fabricated fanciful and destructive systems, may be suffered to sink in the gulph of oblivion never to emerge.

In natural philosophy, the airy fabrics of hypothetical visions ought not to claim the attention of a moment. The sun of Newton has absorbed the radiance of all other luminaries in this department. His works and those of his followers will, of course, supersede the infinite number of preceding folios, which, to use the expressions of Horace, may be sent to wrap up frankincense and perfumes, the only way in which they can now be useful. He to whom the works of the great philosopher are unintelligible, may acquiesce with security in the illustrations of Pemberton, Rowning, Ferguson, and many other recent experimentalists. The lover of natural history, zoology, and botany, will not be at a loss in the selection of books, while fame resounds the names of Buffon, of Pennant, of Linnæus. The romances of Pliny and his imitators will have no charms with the lover of truth. Their language is often good, but their matter contemptible.

To the classical scholar, the proper books are usually pointed out by the superintendents of his education; and when once he has tasted them, his own improved taste and judgment will direct him in the choise of modern productions. Every one knows who were the

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best authors in the Augustan age; and the chief caution necessary is, that the text of a Virgil, a Horace, an Ovid, may not be lost in the attention given to the tedious comments of a few Dutchmen and their dull imitators. I have known those who have toiled through the classics *cum notis variorum*, much less acquainted with them than he who never read them but in Sandby's edition. In attending to Burman and Heinsius, they overlooked the text, which was lost like a jewel in a dunghill. These laborious annotators explain what needs not explanation, and with a little critical knavery pass by a real difficulty without notice. I am convinced that a taste for the classics is rather impeded than promoted by the Dauphin edition, in which boys are initiated; but in which the words of the author are choked, like wholesome plants among weeds, by the notes and interpretations. To be possessed of comments on the classics is however desirable, for difficulties will sometimes occur which at first sight perplex the most ingenious; but I should prefer, for common reading, such editions as that of Jones's Horace.

Directions for the formation of the lady's library have often been wanted by those, who, with an inclination for the elegant amusement of reading, have been unable to indulge it properly, because they had none to guide them in their choice. In my humble opinion, the following books might have a place in it, not only without hazard of ill consequences, but with great advantage to taste, and to that personal beauty which arises from intellectual elegance. All the periodical publications of repute that have been written on the model of the Spectator; Rollin's works, Plutarch's Lives, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and the most esteemed historians of their own country, may be confidently recommended. To these, for the sake of im-

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bibing a classical taste, may be added the best translations of the ancients, such as Pope's Homer and Melmoth's Pliny. If French books are required, those of Boileau and Fontenelle may with propriety be admitted. Novels, it is feared, will not be dispensed with; those then of Richardson and Fielding are allowed, yet not without reluctance. The ladies will choose in this department for themselves. Every thing indelicate will of course be excluded; but perhaps there is not less danger in works called sentimental. They attack the heart more successfully, because more cautiously. Religious books will find a place, but not without restriction; for their is a species of devotional composition, which, by inflaming the passions and imagination, contributes, in some degree, to corruption, while it seems to promote the warmest piety. From their sensibility of heart, and warmth of fancy, the softer sex is supposed to be most inclined to admit the errors of mystics and enthusiasts: and many devotees have shown, that passion of the religious kind is not always a certain preservative of virtuous conduct.

No. CLXXI.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ODYSSEY, ON POPE'S TRANSLATION, MR. SPENCE'S ESSAY, &c.

It is generally agreed, that the Odyssey is inferior to the Iliad. It is thought by Longinus, as well as by other critics, to have been the production of Homer's old age, when it may reasonably be supposed the ardour of his genius was in some degree abated. "In the Odyssey," says that critic, "he may be justly said to resemble the setting sun, whose grandeur still remains without the original heat of his beams. Like the ocean, whose very shores, when deserted by the tide, mark out how wide it sometimes flows; so Ho-

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mer's genius when ebbing into all those fabulous and incredible ramblings of Ulysses, shows plainly how sublime it once had been. I am speaking of old age, but it is the old age of Homer."

It is certain, that if the Odyssey is not to be placed in the same rank with the Iliad, so neither ought it to obtain so low a class as to be overlooked and disregarded. It has, however, been neglected by the moderns; and they who have been able to repeat the Iliad, have scarcely deigned to read the Odyssey. Every school-boy is acquainted with the anger of Achilles, and its consequences, while he neither knows, nor is solicitous to learn, the adventures of the wise Ulysses; though wisdom, it may be supposed, would be commonly a better model for his imitation than valour.

An ingenious writer has endeavoured to vindicate the Odyssey from the neglect in which it has long lain; but a prepossession in favour of established customs has hitherto prevented our public schools from substituting it in the room of the Iliad. That the Iliad should be neglected, is not indeed to be wished, because it is by far the better poem; but that it should engross our whole attention to the utter exclusion of the Odyssey, is certainly unreasonable.

The Iliad presents us with a rough prospect, like that of high mountains, craggy rocks, and foaming cataracts; while the Odyssey exhibits a softer scene, and suggests ideas similar to those which arise from the landscape, where all is mild, serene, and beautiful. The one is like the pictures of Poussin, the other like those of Claude Lorrain. A reader admires the Iliad, but he loves the Odyssey.

The works of Homer appeared so early in the world, and since their appearance have been so frequently praised and illustrated, that at this late period it is not necessary to add to the general panegyric-

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Suffice it to recommend the perusal of a few authors, which may clear the way to the study of the Odyssey. Among these are the papers in the Adventurer on this subject, Pope's Notes to his translation, and, above all, Mr. Spence's very elegant and ingenious Essay. As to the translation itself, it abounds with faults and absurdities. Without derogating from the merit of Pope as an original poet, we may venture to pronounce his Odyssey a paraphrase, rather than a just translation of Homer. The copy no more resembles the picture than the portrait on a sign-post usually resembles the personage intended to be exhibited. The chief beauty of Homer is simplicity, which in the translation, is sacrificed to a gaudy glare and artificial embellishments. As a poem considered by itself, it has many beautiful passages; but as a translation, it is perhaps unworthy the reputation it has obtained. The translation of the Iliad is by no means a faithful copy of the original, but of itself it is a fine poem, scarcely to be equalled for its language by any English author.

To censure so celebrated a name, might appear arrogant in an individual, were he not supported by many and judicious critics. Mr. Spence, whose opinion is decisive, and *instar omnium*, points out defects in Pope's translation of the Odyssey, which could never have escaped so great a poet but from haste and weariness. In this work, Pope was assisted by inferior writers; but as the whole is published under his name, he will ever be answerable for its faults.

Mr. Spence's Essay on the Odyssey, at the same time that it will exhibit the deformities of the translation, will inspire a taste for the beauties of the original; and, indeed, the general remarks, which are interspersed with the greatest judgment and elegance, will contribute to teach a just method of criticism in almost every species of poetry.

Mr. Spence was a truly classical writer. That he

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chiefly wrote in dialogue is to be lamented; for that form, where the persons are fictitious, has seldom been approved in England, though it has often succeeded in France. His Polymetis would have been much more read than it has been, if it had not been written in dialogue.

No. CLXXII.

THOUGHTS ON THE ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS OF SOPHOCLES, AND SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES RESPECTING THE GRECIAN DRAMA.

Of the three Greek dramatic poets, Sophocles is the most celebrated; and of the productions of Sophocles, the Œdipus Tyrannus is the most excellent. It has stood the test of the severest criticism. The unities of time, place, and action are inviolably preserved in it: and while it satisfies the critic who judges by the laws of Aristotle, it pleases the common reader and spectator, who forms his opinion from the feelings of his nature. Never was there a tale more affecting than that of Œdipus, and never was any tale told more pathetically than this is by Sophocles. Many a tear has it excited among the Athenians, whose hearts were ever finely susceptible of the sentiments of humanity: but the best translation of it would not equally please in a modern theatre. Many other causes of its failure may be assigned, besides that simplicity, artlessness, and incomplexity of fable, which the taste of the moderns is too much vitiated to relish.

In the first place, it must be considered, that every original composition must lose something of its beauty from the best translation. It is a common remark, that the spirit of an author, like that of some essences, evaporates by transfusion. Foreign manners, and foreign customs, are seldom understood by a common audience, and as seldom approved. The majority of

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an English audience are unacquainted with ancient learning, and can take no pleasure in the representation of men and things which have not fallen under their notice. Add to this, that they love to see tragedies formed on their own histories, or on histories in which they are in some measure nearly interested. When Shakespeare's historical dramas are represented, they feel as Englishmen in every event; they take part with their Edwards and Henries, as friends and fellow-countrymen; they glory in their successes, and sympathise with their misfortunes. To a similar circumstance may be attributed part of the applause which the Athenians bestowed on this tragedy of Sophocles; for Œdipus was king of a neighbouring country, with which the Athenians were always intimately connected either in war or peace.

These considerations should teach us to content ourselves with admiring Sophocles in the closet, without attempting to obtrude him on the stage, which must always accommodate itself to the taste of the times, whether unreasonable or just, consistent or capricious.

In truth, the warmest admirer of ancient Greek poetry must acknowledge a barrenness of invention in the choice of subjects. The Trojan war, and the misfortunes of the Theban king, are almost the only sources from which those great masters of composition, Homer, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, have derived their subject-matter. They have, indeed, embellished these little parts of history with all the fire of imagination and melody of poetry; but is it not strange, that in a country like Greece, where the restless spirit of military virtue was continually forming noble designs, and achieving glorious exploits, the poets could discover no illustrious deed worthy of being painted in never-fading colours, but the worn-

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out stories of a wooden horse, and a sphinx's riddle? It is difficult for an age like the present, which hungers and thirsts after novelty, to conceive that an audience could sit with patience during the recital of a story which all must have heard a thousand times; especially as it was unadorned with the meretricious artifices of players, with the tricks of the stage, with thunder and lightning, hail and rain, tolling bells, and tinsel garments.

But the sameness of the story in the Grecian poets became agreeable to the audience, through that veneration which every record of ancient history demands; and it was a kind of poetical fashion to select the stories from the Trojan war. That the tale on which a dramatic poem is founded should not be of modern date, has, I think, been laid down as a rule. Nor is it the precept of an arbitrary critic, but is justified by nature and reason. Imagination always exceeds reality. The vulgar could never prevail upon themselves to look on scenes, to the reality of which they have been eye-witnesses, with the same ardour as on those which they have received from their ancestors, and have painted with the strongest colours on their fancy. In obedience to this rule, the Greek poets borrowed their subjects from ancient facts universally known, believed, and admired; and the audience entered the theatre to behold a lively representation of the picture already formed in their own imagination.

A modern reader has not a preparatory disposition of mind necessary to receive all that pleasure from these compositions which transported an ancient Greek. He does not glow with that patriotic ardour which he would feel on reading glorious deeds of a fellow-countryman, when Homer represents a hero breaking the Trojan phalanx and encountering a Hector. He does not consider an ancient Theban or Athenian involved in the guilt of undesigned parri-

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cide or incest, nearly enough connected with him to excite his sympathy in a violent degree; but all these feelings in a Grecian audience, occasioned by a Grecian sufferer, account for that uncommon delight which they took in their dramatic representations, and for their freedom from that satiety which might otherwise have been occasioned by the reiteration of a simple tale. After all, I think, if pedantry is to be imputed to the admirers of Grecian literature, it is when they prefer the dramatic compositions of Greece to those of England; and I must reluctantly confess, that the minute students of Greek quantity in the Greek tragedians, who assume great merit in their frivolous studies and discoveries, are both puerile and pedantic.

An English audience has lately shown itself not so averse from the ancient tragedy as was expected, by its favourable reception of Elfrida and Caractacus, written on the Grecian model: but, perhaps, this event is not so much to be attributed to the revival of the fine taste of an Attic audience, as to the insatiable avidity of something new. The English are as fond of the καινον τι, in literature, as the Athenians were in politics: but whether caprice or reason, whether taste or fashion, gave them a favourable reception on the English stage, it is certain that Elfrida and Caractacus are elegant dramas, formed on the ancient model, and may be read with great advantage by those who wish to entertain a just idea of the Greek tragedy without a knowledge of the language. Yet what are they to Hamlet and Macbeth?

No. CLXXIII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON SOME OF THE MINOR ENGLISH POETS.

We are told, in the epistle to the Pisos, that poetical mediocrity is intolerable; yet we find that poets of inferior merit, as well as fame, are read with pleasure.

It is true, indeed, that the loudest melody of the

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grove is poured forth by the lark, the blackbird, the thrush, and the nightingale: but it is no less true, that their pauses are often filled by the sweet warblings of the linnet and the red-breast. The lofty cedar that waves on the summit of the poetic mountain, seems to overshadow and exclude, by its luxuriance, all other vegetation. He, however, who approaches it, will find many a violet and primrose springing at its root. He will often discover in the lowliest valley, amid a plentiful growth of weeds, a modest flower lifting its humble head, and becoming more beautiful by seeming to conceal the native sweetness of its odour, and the lustre of its hues.

The first dignities in the poetical commonwealth are preoccupied by such writers as Spenser, Milton, Dryden, and Pope; but, at the same time, the numerous subaltern stations are frequently filled with honour.

Many poets of original beauty were in their own times so obscure as to be now totally unknown. Such are the authors of our most popular ballads, the general reception of which is a proof of their excellence, more convincing than the decisions of criticism. The learned poet has commonly owed much of his excellence to imitation; but the ballad-writer drew only from his own resources when he sung the wild wood-notes of nature. Their metre often possesses a kind of harmony quite different from classical versification, yet, at the same time, truly pleasing to the uncorrupted ear.

Of the poets of England once known and admired, several are fallen into total disrepute. Drayton was honoured by a commentator who must have given fame to any writer. If Selden's taste was equal to his learning, Drayton is indeed most highly distinguished. The Polyolbion is, however, no more read; and the

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slow length of the tedious Alexandrine in which it is written, will prevent its revival, as it has hastend its oblivion.

The Gondibert of D'Avenant has ever been the subject of critical controversy from the time of its publication. Its plan was originally defended by the great Hobbes, and its execution has been greatly praised. Yet few have attended to it with any pleasure, and still fewer have had a degree of patience sufficient to bear them through the perusal of it. The truth is, the stanza which D'Avenant adopted, is better suited to elegiac than to heroic poetry. A beautifully descriptive passage, interspersed in the course of two or three hundred lines, will not alleviate the tedium of the rest; as an occasional flash of lightning cannot illuminate the continual gloominess of an extensive prospect.

For the honour of English literature, most of the poetical productions which were admired in the reign of Charles should now be consigned to everlasting oblivion. They display, indeed, a sportive licentiousness of fancy, or rather a loose wantonness of imagery; but they are incorrect beyond the example of any age. Some of the best poets of the times, among whom were Mulgrave, Dorset, and Roscommon, though possessed of wit and taste, produced nothing worthy of immortality. The morals of the age were as licentious as the taste; and the love of pleasure introduced an indolence, which admitted not an application sufficient to give the last polish of correct elegance. I should not repine at seeing them all burnt at a holiday bonfire. More than half the minor poems in our language might be thrown in to increase the blaze. A wit might say, they would put the fire out.

The study of the ancients, and of the French, has gradually refined the national taste to a degree of fas-

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tidious delicacy; and writers who have possessed classical beauty have been read with admiration, though they have had nothing to recommend them to the notice of a Charles the Second or a Sedley.

The number of minor poets who displayed great merit, yet who seem to have derived it all from imitation, is too tedious to enumerate. Philips and his friend Smith were correct and classical in a degree superior to their contemporaries. Philips has performed the task of imitation, with an accuracy of resemblance scarcely equalled by any of his followers but Browne. The Phædra and Hippolitus of Smith has ever been esteemed a fine poem; and the beauty of the style, and harmony of the verse, induce us to regret that he lived to finish so few productions. Yet, I think even this has been much more praised than it deserved.

Within the space of half the last century, a desire to imitate the excellent models of our most celebrated bards, has crowded the middle ranks with a multitude too great to obtain, even for the deserving individual, any very distinguished fame. One poet has arisen after another, and supplanted him, as the wave succeeding swallows up the wave that went before. Most of them have exhibited an harmonious versification and have selected a profusion of splendid expressions; but have in general been deficient in that noble fire, and those simple graces, which mark originality of genius. They are, however, read by those whose taste is not very correct, with pleasure, and fill up the intervals of avocation among the busy and commercial, who are unacquainted with the Greeks and Romans, and with whom novelty often possesses the charm of beauty.

There is a force and solemnity in the poems of Tickell, which at least place him on a level with his

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patron as a poet. His Colin and Lucy is one of the most sweetly pathetic poems in the language.

Broome, though honourably associated with Pope in the work of translation, seems to have had scarcely any other merit than this to bear him down the stream of time. He might be thrown on the bonfire.

Trapp wrote Latin verse with elegance, and was a good critic; but it has been observed of his Virgil, that he had done wisely to have stopped at his preface. He was an excellent divine, yet a sorry poet.

The genius of Collins seems in some measure to have resembled that of Tickell. Dignity, solemnity, and pathos, are the striking features of his compositions. None but a true poet could have written the song over Fidele in Shakespeare's Cymbeline.

The English Tibullus, Hammond, has written truly elegant verse; but I know not whether his representations greatly affect the heart, though they are coldly approved by the judgment and imagination. They have, however, served as patterns for the love-sick nymphs and swains, who delight in giving vent to their passion in the language of poetry. Yet, as he expresses not the language of nature, I love him not.

Love and its effects were beautifully described by the elegant Lord Lyttelton. To assert that he was remarkable for poetical genius, were to lessen, by endeavouring to exaggerate, his praise. Force, fire, and exuberance of invention, were not his excellencies; but that equable beauty of sentiment and diction, which results from a polished mind. The graces distinguish his compositions, as the virtues marked his honourable life. But genius was deficient.

Moore's Fables display indubitable marks of genius; but he wants the simplicity of Gay and Fontaine. He shows, however, a talent for description which would have shone in the higher kinds of poetry; and a deli-

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cacy of mind, which, it might be supposed, could be acquired only in a higher sphere than that in which he was born.

Genius and learning were possessed in a very eminent degree by Merrick. He had that peculiar kind of genius which qualified him to excel in the department of sacred poetry. It is to be wished, that his version of the Psalms were adopted in churches where the congregations are learned and polite, not only in the place of Sternhold and Hopkins, but of Brady and Tate. Such an event would be no less advantageous to piety than to taste; though happily the common congregations are not fastidiously nice in their taste for poetry.

Upon the whole, we may say, with Horace, that mediocrity in poetry renders it undesirable "to gods, to men, and to booksellers." We certainly have too much of it in the present age. It is become a nauseous dose, though wrapped up in hot-pressed and wire-wove paper.

No. CLXXIV.

CURSORY AND UNCONNECTED REMARKS ON SOME OF THE MINOR GREEK POETS.

The intrinsic graces of the classic writers have charmed every mind which was susceptible of the beauties of spirit, taste, and elegance. Since the revival of learning, innumerable critics have employed themselves in displaying the beauties which they felt, or in removing the difficulties and obstructions which retarded their progress in the perusal of the ancients. At present, there is scarcely any room for criticism on them; and the most laborious commentator finds, with regret, his profoundest researches, and his acutest remarks, anticipated by the lucubrations of former critics; but as there is scarcely a greater difference between

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the features of the face, than between the faculties of the mind in different men, and as objects must strike various feelings in various manners, the works of taste and genius may, on different reviews, furnish inexhaustible matter for critical observation. Upon this principle, authors of the present age venture to add to the labours of their predecessors, without fearing or incurring the imputation of vanity or impertinence.

The present remarks shall be confined to some of the Greek Minor Poets, without minutely attending to chronological, or any other order.

In the union of dignity with sweetness, of melody with strength, the Greek is better adapted to beautiful composition than any modern language. The Italian has all its softness, but wants its force. The French possesses elegance and expression, but is deficient in sound and dignity. The English is strong, nervous, flowery, fit for animated oratory, and enthusiastic poetry, but abounds with Saxon or Gothic monosyllables, ill adapted to express the music of mellifluous cadence. To compare the Dutch and the German with the language of Athens, were to compare the jarring noise of grating iron with the soft warblings of the flute. The other languages of Europe are equally unfit for harmonious modulation, and indeed cannot properly be examined in this place as the people who speak them have not yet distinguished themselves by any writings truly classical.

The Greek Epigram naturally falls first under our present consideration. Of these little compositions, which owe their origin to Greece, none can be insensible of the beauty, whose taste is not vitiated by the less delicate wit of the modern Epigrammatist. Indeed, to relish the simple graces of the Greek Epigram, the taste must not be formed upon the model even of the celebrated Martial. Among the Latin poets,

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Catullus approaches nearest to the Greeks in this species of composition.

The Anthologiæ, still extant, are written by various authors, and there are scarcely sufficient epigrams of any one, to discriminate his manner from that of others. Suffice it to remark, in general, that their beauty does not often consist in a point, or witty conceit, but in a simplicity of thought, and a sweetness of language. I suspect that many of them are no better than our common church-yard inscriptions, of which the authors have often been the imitators of Sternhold and Hopkins, that venerable order of minstrels and parish clerks. But Greek gives a charm to the poorest thoughts of the most puerile epigram. In plain English, the clerks and sextons of an English village often surpass the poetry of the Anthologiæ, in which Sternhold himself is often *outsternholded.*

The golden verses of Pythagoras, though not remarkable for splendour of diction or flowing versification, are yet highly beautiful in the concise and forcible mode of inculcating morality, and virtues almost Christian. The earlier philosophers of Greece conveyed their tenets in verse, not so much because they aspired to the character of poets, as because precepts delivered in metre were more easily retained in the memory of their disciples. Pythagoras has comprised every necessary rule for the conduct of life in this little poem, and he that commits it to memory will not want a guide to direct his behaviour under any event: but though the morality of these is their more valuable beauty, yet are they by no means destitute of poetical merit.

That generosity of soul which ever accompanies true genius, has induced the poets and philosophers of all ages to stand forth in the cause of liberty. Alcæus,

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of whose merits from the monuments of antiquity we may form the most exalted idea, first raised himself to eminence by a poem entitled Stasiotica, in a violent invective against tyrants in general at Pittacus, at that time the tyrant of Athens. It has not escaped the general wreck, and we have only a few broken specimens of this celebrated writer's works preserved by the ancient grammarians. We must, therefore, be content to learn his character from the judicious Quinctilian, and the learned Dionysius of Halicarnassus: the former of whom asserts, that he was concise, sublime, accurate, and in many respects resembled Homer: the latter, that he had a grandeur, brevity, and sweetness equally blended throughout all his compositions.

Stesichorus, according to Quinctilian, was remarkable for strength of genius. He gave to lyric poetry all the solemnity of the Epopœa. Had he known how to restrain the impetuosity of his genius, it is said he would have rivalled Homer: but, unfortunately, the noble warmth of his temper urged him beyond the bounds of just writing, and he seems to have failed of excellence by a redundancy of beauties.

The fragments of Menander are sufficiently excellent to induce every votary of learning to regret the loss of his works. Some indeed have thought, that time never gave a greater blow to polite literature, than in the destruction of the Comedies of Menander; but as Terence has preserved his spirit and his style, perhaps the want of the original is compensated by the exact copyings of that excellent author. Quinctilian, from whose judgment there is scarcely an appeal, has represented Menander as alone sufficient to form our taste and style. The few remains, preserved by Stobæus, whether the beauty of the sentiments or the

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purity of the diction be regarded, must be pronounced uncommonly excellent. They are, however, too generally known to require illustration.

Simonides is characterised by Longinus as a poet remarkable for the pathetic. Of his writings very few have survived the injuries of time. The little poem on Danaë is, however, sufficient to justify the judgment of Longinus. Nothing can be more delicately tender, or more exquisitely pathetic. There is something inexpressibly pleasing to the mind, in the representation of a mother addressing a sleeping infant unconscious of its danger, with all the endearing blandishments of maternal fondness.

The other remarkable poem of this author, which time has spared, is of a very different kind. It is a Satire on Women, and is well known by a prosaic translation of it inserted in the Essays of a celebrated modern writer.

Alcman of Laconia is another melancholy instance of the depredations which the hand of time has made on the most valuable works of antiquity. Of this author, once celebrated throughout Greece, quoted by the learned and repeated by the fair, scarcely the name is known in the present age. Athenæus, Hephæstion, the scholiast on Pindar, Eustathius, and Plutarch, have vindicated him from absolute oblivion, by preserving a few of his fragments. Love verses, which since his time have employed some of the greatest writers, and have been admired by the most sensible readers, say the critics, were of his invention. All who preceded him had invariably written in Hexameter. He subjoined the elegiac verse, and may justly claim the honour of having introduced that species of poetry, which Ovid and the other Latin elegiac writers have since advanced to a most pleasing species of composition. I rather think nature invented them.

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Archilochus wrote iambics and elegiacs; the former, satirical; the latter, amorous. That he succeeded in his attempts, we have sufficient reason to conclude from the testimony of Horace. There is not enough of him remaining, to enable us to form a judgment of the impartiality of his decision, and we must be contented to acquiesce in his authority.

Lucian says, in one of his dialogues, that the poets have given Jupiter many of the most pompous epithets, merely for the sake of a sonorous word to fill up a verse. The hymns of Orpheus abound with these expletives; and the reader is often disgusted with sounding verse almost destitute of sense. If, however, they were composed for music, they may pass uncensured by some: for it seems to have been generally and most absurdly agreed, and it is observable at this day, that very little attention is to be paid to the words of Operas, Odes, and Songs, which are written merely for music. The poems of Orpheus, if those which are extant are like all his productions, would certainly move no stones. What has been said of the hymns of this poet, may be extended to many other Greek compositions of the same species. General censure will, however, seldom be just; and it must be confessed, that there are some among them, particularly those of Callimachus, truly sublime and beautiful.

There was a species of poetry among the Athenians, which, in some measure, resembled many of our English ballads. At the approach of a war, or after a victory or defeat, the poets and statesmen usually dispersed among the people some short composition, which tended to animate them with courage, or to inspire them with joy. Solon, the wise legislator of Athens, was too well acquainted with the power of poetry over the human heart, to neglect this efficacious method of enforcing his laws, and propagating

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his institutions among the lower ranks of the Athenians. There are still extant some of his pieces, which bear internal marks of having been purposely written to give the people a passion for liberty, to inspire them with a love of virtue, and to teach them obedience to the laws. They are, indeed, written in the elegiac measure, but have nothing of the soft amorous strain which distinguishes the Ovidian elegy. They are manly, moral, and severe. By these, it is a well-known fact, the Athenians were animated to resume a war which they had dropt in despair; and, in consequence of the ardour which these inspired, they obtained a complete victory over their enemies. There are several in the English language equally good as poems, and, as it is said, productive of similar effects.

Tyrtæus wrote in a similar style, but entirely confined himself to martial subjects. So strongly is military valour, and the love of liberty, enforced in his little composition, that it would by no means be absurd to attribute the victories of the Grecians over the Persians, as much to a Tyrtæus, as to a Miltiades or Themistocles. The effects of such political ballads have been frequently seen among the English in time of war. Every one has heard of Lillabullero.—Many a poor fellow has been tempted to quit the plough and the loom for the sword, on hearing a song in praise of Hawke or Wolfe roared by his obstreperous companions. These verses are too deficient in point of elegance to admit of quotations, and the frequent opportunities of hearing them from the mouths of the vulgar render repetition in this place unnecessary. The bards of Grub-street are commonly the authors of our martial ballads; but at Athens they were written by poets, statesmen, and philosophers. We may judge of the influence of their productions, by the powerful effect of our rude and even nonsensical rhymes. The more nonsensical the more popular.

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Few ancient authors have been less read than Lycophron. His obscurity not only retards but disgusts the reader; yet, perhaps, his want of perspicuity, though highly disagreeable to the student, is an excellence in a work consisting of predictions. Prophecies and oracles have ever been purposely obscure, and almost unintelligible. The mind that attends to these uninspired predictions of paganism, voluntarily renounces reason, and believes the more as it understands the less; but, whether Lycophron is to be praised or censured for obscurity, certain it is, that on this account he will never become a favourite author. Notwithstanding the labours of the great Potter, he is still difficult, and will probably continue to repose in dust and darkness, amidst the dull collections of antiquated museums. If he were sacrificed to the genius of dulness, none need bewail the loss of Lycophron.

The poems of Bacchylides, however he is neglected by the moderns, were highly honoured by an ancient, who was esteemed a complete judge of literary merit. Hiero hesitated not to pronounce them superior to the odes of Pindar, which have been generally celebrated as the utmost efforts of human genius. The opinion of Hiero may, however, be questioned, with an appearance of justice, when it is considered that his character, as a critic, was established by his courtiers, who, to gain his favour, might not scruple to violate the truth.

The gay, the sprightly, the voluptuous Anacreon is known to every reader. His subjects and his manner of treating them have captivated all who are susceptible either of pleasure or of poetry. There is, indeed, an exquisite tenderness, delicacy, and taste in the sentiments; but I have always thought he derived no small share of his beauty from the choice of expressions, and the peculiar harmony of his verses. It has been objected to him by rigid moralists, that his writings tend to promote drunkenness and debauchery. But this

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objection might in some degree be extended to a great part of the finest writers in the lyric and epigrammatic line, ancient and modern. A man of sense and judgment will admire the beauties of a composition, without suffering its sentiments to influence his principles or his conduct. He will look upon the more licentious sallies of Anacreontic writers as little *jeux d'esprit*, designed to please in the hour of convivial festivity, but not to regulate his thoughts and actions in the serious concerns of life. Whatever may be the moral tendency of the writings, it is certain that as a poet he is unrivalled in that species of composition which he adopted. Many have been the imitations of him, but few have succeeded. The joys of love and wine have indeed been described by his followers; but their touches are more like the daubings of an unskilful painter, than the exquisite traits of a masterly hand. Cowley, whose genius certainly partook more of the Anacreontic than of the Pindaric, has been one of his happiest imitators, for he is rather to be called an imitator than a translator: but the English reader will not form a just idea of the merits of Anacreon from those Bacchanalian songs which so frequently appear under the title of Anacreontic. Indeed there is no good translation of Anacreon; neither is it desirable that there should be. Dissolute and unprincipled persons may wish to turn a penny by exciting the libidinous passions, or recommending drunkenness, under the name of Anacreon; but they deserve the contempt of all who regard the happiness of society. The passions and tendencies to voluptuousness and intemperance are sufficiently strong without the *stimuli* of licentious rhyme.

The passion of love was never more strongly felt or described than by the sensible Sappho. The little Greek ode preserved by Longinus, the metre of which

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derives its name from her, has been translated by Mr. Philips with all the air of an original. The Latin translation of Catullus appears much inferior to that of our countrymen. The Greek indeed is much corrupted, and, as it now stands, is less pleasing than the English Every one, who, on reading it, recollects its occasion must lament that so warm a passion, so feelingly represented, was excited by an improper object. She wrote also a tender hymn to Venus. But her works are happily lost.

Scaliger, whose judgment, though sometimes called in question, ought certainly to have great weight, bestowed very extraordinary praises on the writings of Oppian; a poet, who, though he has been compared to Virgil in his Georgics, is only perused by the curious in Grecian literature, and is known only by name to the common reader. The emperor Caracalla, under whom he flourished, is said to have been so charmed with his poems, as to have ordered him a *stater* for each verse. Modern critics will, however, dare to call in question the taste of Caracalla. The works of Oppian consisted of halieutics, cynegetics, and ixeutics, the latter of which have perished by the injuries of time. He was a grammarian, which, in the idea of the Greeks, meant a professed scholar; and, in every age, the poems of men who professed literature have been less admired than the vigorous and wild productions of uncultivated genius. The former are contented to avoid faults, but genius labours after beauties only. Apollonius is more correct than Homer, and Johnson than Shakespeare; but Apollonius and Johnson are coldly approved, while Homer and Shakespeare are beheld with astonishment almost equal to idolatry. It should, however, be remarked to the honour of Apollonius, that the judicious Virgil borrowed several of his most celebrated similes from him; and perhaps he is not to be ranked among

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the *poëtæ minores*. Oppian has met with the usual fate of grammarians, and has scarcely been read; but the reader of taste will yet find many passages, which, if they are not sublime, he must confess to be beautiful.

Tryphiodorus has been introduced to the English reader by the excellent translation of the ingenious Mr. Merrick. Homer he certainly imitated, and has succeeded in the imitation. Copies taken by great masters, though inferior in general, yet in some parts commonly rival their original. Tryphiodorus reaches not the sublimer flights of the Mæonian bard, but he sometimes follows his less daring excursions at no distant interval. It is enough to recommend him to general approbation, that with a moderate portion of Homer's fire, he has more correctness. He may be read with advantage not only in a poetical, but in an historical view. Where Homer discontinued the thread of his story, Tryphiodorus has taken it up. Indeed this poem is a necessary supplement to the Iliad, without which the reader is left unsatisfied. Tryphiodorus is said to have written another poem, called Οδυσσεια λειπογραμματη, in which he has omitted, through each book, the letter which marked the number of it. Such a kind of composition is trifling and beneath a man of genius; but it must be allowed to be a work of great difficulty, and consequently a proof of great application. Nor ought it to injure the character of Tryphiodorus, as a poet, but to be viewed as the wanton production of an ingenious, but ill-employed grammarian. If Homer wrote the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, and Virgil descanted on his Gnat, without losing the dignity of their characters, inferior writers may indulge the inoffensive sallies of whim, without the imputation of folly or puerility.

In the perusal of some of these, and other of the minor poets whose works are extant, the lover of the

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Grecian muse finds a pleasing variety, after reading the more sublime and beautiful productions of Homer. But I think it would be, upon the whole, a benefit to literature, if there could be a general clearance of rubbish; and if the minor poets, like the stars at sun-rise, could be made to disappear entirely on the effulgence of a Homer, a Virgil, and a Milton. Life is too short to be consumed on the study of mediocrity.

No. CLXXV.

A CONCLUDING ESSAY.

The writers of periodical papers have usually subjoined, at the close of their lucubrations, an account of the origin and progress of their work, explained the signatures of correspondents, and assigned each paper to its proper claimant.—I am now arrived at the boundary prescribed to my excursions; but I have, I believe, no information of this kind remaining to be communicated. I have already accounted for the origin of this work, and intimated, that the composition of it has served, at various times, and in different situations, to amuse a few intervals of literary leisure; and, with respect to assistants and correspondents, the nature of the undertaking could not possibly admit them. If, therefore, any praise should be thought due, it must come undivided, and contribute to lessen whatever severity of censure may be incurred, the whole weight of which must fall without participation.

I mean not, however, to delude myself with an idea of influencing a reader by apologies: the submissions and excuses of authors are of little importance; the public claims an uncontrovertible right to decide for itself on every composition which solicits regard; and its final decisions are usually no less just than immutable.

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Instead then of dwelling on such topics, I will take leave of the candid reader, if any reader should have had patience to accompany me so far, by a summary recapitulation, and perhaps addition of a few admonitions which may be salutary. I pretend not to collect all the scattered remarks which have preceded, into one point of view, but merely to repeat and add such as may possibly occur in filling up the paper which now lies before me. I hope the egotism will be pardoned on this and several other occasions, as it is by no means easy at all times to speak in the third person of one's self without evident affectation.

I have endeavoured, throughout the whole series of these Papers, to warn those who are entering into life (and to them my admonitions are chiefly addressed) against those fashionable examples which often militate against all that is decent, regular, virtuous, and learned. Unless we are taught in our youth to be on our guard against their destructive influence, we shall certainly incur imminent danger of corrupting our principles and practice, by a blind and bigoted imitation. Experience daily evinces, that, without this precaution, all the advantages of a virtuous and learned education, all the documents of paternal care, all prudential, moral, and religious restraints may be totally frustrated. The rich and great may be considered as beacons on a promontory; and if they hang out deceitful lights, they who will allow no other signal to direct them (and the number of these is infinite) will probably be misguided in the voyage of their lives, till they are dashed on rocks or sunk in whirlpools. I think I can confidently declare, that I was not influenced by splenetic or envious motives, when I attacked the pride, folly, and wickedness of some among the nominal great, who justify every enormity, under the name of fashionable indulgence; but that I

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have been actuated solely by a sincere conviction, that such an attack is the most effectual means of promoting the interest of virtue. Even an enemy will allow that it is not the most approved method of advancing private interest, for it may offend those in whose hands are the riches and honours of this life.

If I have at any time indulged an asperity of censure, it has arisen from an honest detestation of vice, meanness, selfishness, and insolence, in those whose example is seducing, and consequently most injurious. The rank and opulence of worthless persons has had no other effect on me than to excite additional indignation. If any feel themselves hurt by my animadversions, their very pain is a proof that they suffer deservedly. Nothing in this book can make a worthy man my foe; and with respect to the unworthy, I fear not their power, and I despise their malevolence.

In adopting modes of address and external behaviour, the study of which appears to engross the attention of many, I have advised the young man to begin his work at the foundation; to correct his heart and temper, that the graces of his appearance may proceed from that copious and infallible source of whatever is pleasing, a disposition truly virtuous and unaffectedly amiable. I have exhorted him to avoid servility, adulation, preferment-hunting, and meanness of every kind; to endeavour, indeed, to please those with whom he converses, but to let the endeavour arise from benevolent motives, from a humane and Christian desire of diffusing ease and happiness among the children of one Almighty Father, and the partakers of the same miserable nature. I have advised him to be firm, yet gentle,—manly, yet polite: to cultivate every ornamental accomplishment which leads not to effeminacy, and to study to be as agreeable as possible, while he can be at the same time sincere; to despise, and most

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studiously avoid, that common but base character, which, with motives peculiarly selfish and contracted, pretends to uncommon good-nature, friendship, proportioned to the rank or fortune of the persons who are courted, without the least regard to virtue or attainments; whose politeness is that of a valet or French dancing-master, and whose objects, after all its professions and pretensions to liberality, are no less mean and dirty than those of a Jew usurer.* I have advised him to value the approbation of his own heart, and the comforts of a clear conscience, above the smiles, the applause, and the remarks of a vain, a wicked, a deceitful, and a transitory world.

In literature, I have recommended the union of taste with science, and of science with taste; a selection of the best authors on all the subjects which claim his particular attention; a love of originals, and a due distrust of translations; a constant effort to obtain depth and solidity; a persevering, regular, indefatigable industry, especially in the earlier periods of a studious course, not only because no distinguished excellence can be obtained without it, but also because a close attention to study, and an ardent love of letters in the juvenile age, is a great preservative of innocence, and conduces much to the diversion or extinction of passions and tendencies which cannot be habitually indulged without sin, shame, and misery.

The general tenour of the moral admonitions of this book, has been to urge the young man to labour incessantly in overcoming the natural propensity of human nature to evil: to aim at perfection, though he

* It may be proper to mention that this paper was written soon after the publication of Lord Chesterfield's Letters; a book which caused many of the strictures in the preceding Essays, it appearing to militate against all moral and religious principle.

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knows he cannot reach it; to aim at it, because he will thus approach much nearer to it than if he gives up the pursuit in the timidity of indolence: to have courage enough to withstand ridicule, the weapon of the wicked in their subtle attacks upon virtue; to beware of the refinements of sophistry, and to be humble enough to learn his duty both to God and man, from the plain doctrines of his catechism: to beware also of the seducing influence of fashionable vice; of those unfortunate persons, who, from a want of education, or from foolish pride, live without God in the world, and even in contradiction to the obvious precepts of natural religion; existing in a state which might almost be called the vegetable, if it did not in a greater degree participate of brutality.—Addresses of a serious kind are to such persons, for the most part, useless, as that pride, self-conceit, and self-importance, which lead them to adopt with ostentation the tenets of infidelity and the practices of immorality, usually renders them deaf and blind to all representations which come unrecommended by opulence, rank, and libertinism. They are wiser in their own eyes, though they often neither read nor think, than the wisest moralists who have yet appeared. But the young man who has been taught not to be dazzled by the false lustre of their characters, will soon learn to pity their errors and shun their example. It is a just remark, which has been made by men intimately acquainted with the living world, that more are ruined by vices which they have adopted through vanity and silly imitation, than to which they have been seduced by the violence of passion and temptation. He who lessens the force of such examples, and obscures those glossy colours which they derive from high stations and large fortunes, greatly promotes the cause of

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morality, and contributes much to prevent the misery and ruin of a rising generation.

In forming political principles, I would uniformly maintain the expediency of always leaning to the side of liberty and the people, and of withstanding, by all legal and rational means, the encroachments of arbitrary power. All men who possess power, well established and confirmed, are naturally inclined to extend and engross it. Let a spirit then be constantly encouraged among the people at large, which may lead them to a jealous vigilance over the possessors of power, and animate them to a manly resistance on the slightest infringement of constitutional liberty. But, at the same time, we must not suffer the artful pursuers of their own interest to delude us by a name enchanting in the sound: we are bound to consider, in our dispassionate moments, the nature of liberty; to see and acknowledge the necessity of subordination, and the happiness of being governed by the equitable operation of impartial laws; to consider the preservation of good order and public tranquillity as greatly conducive to the perpetuation of liberty, when it is once established on a solid basis: to distinguish between a real love of liberty, and a mere impatience of control, which is found to prevail in the bosom of envious and malignant men: to discern the difference between real patriotism and a selfish opposition to present authority, in whomsoever invested, arising from a hope of partaking of it on their deprivation; to remember that experience has abundantly confirmed the remark, that the loudest advocates for liberty, while out of power, are often the most arbitrary and tyrannical, both in the exercise of power, when they have obtained it, and in their private lives and natural dispositions: to beware of the needy adventurer in politics, who has nothing to lose, and has no prospect of gain but in demolishing the fabric raised

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by others, and enriching himself in the general plunder. Such cautions can never be too frequently repeated to the middle ranks, who have been in all ages miserably deluded by the wicked pretensions of a pseudo-patriotism.

I have endeavoured to evince the propriety of appointing men of private virtue and good character to the great, honourable, and efficient offices in the various departments of the state. It is difficult to conceive but that the accumulation of public honours on men of bad characters in private life, is at once destructive of morality, religion, and national prosperity.

It is certainly right to disbelieve and to reprobate all pretensions to public virtue, wherever private virtue is notoriously deficient. Where private virtue is wanting, there can be no soundness of principle; and without soundness of principle, no real virtue of any kind can subsist. Patriotism in a bad man is but disguised wickedness, of a most malignant nature, and usually proceeding from a deceitful, a proud, an envious, a jealous, a cruel, and a selfish disposition. The boasted abilities of profligate and corrupt characters, are often but the desperate efforts of a distress which has overcome all diffidence and restraint, and leads men to fight their way to promotion, by noise, effrontery, and overbearing presumption.

We all, indeed, love power, and it is an useful impulse which urges us to aspire at eminence; but though we may reasonably wish for a share of power, let us learn the virtue not to obstruct its salutary operation in the hands of others, merely because it is not in our own. The truest patriotism may often be evinced by subduing the lust of power, by submissive silence, and by cheerful acquiescence, in a contented retirement, and in an humble exercise of the private and social virtues. The lust of power, like all other lust, is often most

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violent in diabolical dispositions; and the turbulent spirit which it produces is the bane of society.

But amidst our cautions, we shall do well constantly to remember that liberty, with all its accidental evils, is, upon the whole, infinitely more conducive to the happiness and to the improvement of human nature, than the tranquil repose of established despotism. An arbitrary government diffuses a benumbing, freezing, soporific influence over the human faculties, especially in the middle and lowest walks of life; and there is no danger or inconvenience which ought not to be cheerfully incurred to destroy it from the face of the earth. The tree of liberty so well planted and watered in America, will, I hope, flourish more and more; and impart many a slip and sucker to grow in climates which now appear most ungenial to its cultivation. In our own island, we must never neglect the opportunity afforded by a time of distress, to correct the abuses of the constitution, and to push back the gigantic strides of power, with its auxiliary, corruption. Such are the auspicious periods, the golden moments, in which a portion of new health is to be infused into the vitals of the body politic: such the times in which the authorities lawfully constituted ought to purge the corrupting influence which contains the seeds of disease and death to a free commonwealth; in which petty boroughs should be disfranchised, and counties enabled to send a number of members in proportion to their size, wealth, and populousness; in which Old Sarum should no longer be permitted to constitute as many representatives of the people of England as the county of York, and half as many as the metropolis of the empire. But as all great political changes are attended with danger, they should not be attempted without the utmost caution and deliberation. Great changes are attended with great calamities; and nothing but absolute necessity

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can justify any violent alteration in the political system. But it should be considered that renovation, or the restitution of original principles, is by no means innovation. The deviations from them, introduced by corruption, are the innovations.

It is impossible to recapitulate all the variety of suggestions which have preceded, or to make any great addition to them, in the limits of a single paper; neither was it my intention. It is sufficient that a few of the most important points are touched upon in the conclusion of these volumes, with a view to leave a due impression on the mind of the reader, who may be induced, for want of something better, to bestow an idle hour on their perusal. The subjects of Behaviour, Letters, Morals, and Politics, have been already mentioned: It would be a reprehensible omission not to have reserved a place for a few hints on Religion.

It appears to me to be one of the most important precepts in forming our religious principles and ideas, not fully to depend on the conclusions of our own reason; to distrust the acutest understanding; to be really humble; to reverence the opinions received by our forefathers; to remember the shortness of life, the imbecility of human nature, and to accept with pious hope, rather than with disputatious curiosity, the comfortable doctrines and promises of the received revelation. It will be a great inducement to this prime virtue of humility, to reflect on the diseases and pains both of mind and body incident to our nature; on the terrible degeneracy into which we may fall, when deserted by the grace of God; and, at the same time, on the consolation and improvement of heart which may be, and is derived, under every calamity and on the bed of death, from sincere devotion; to pray for faith when doubts arise; to beware of that weak and wicked vanity which instigates the deistical and sceptical pretenders to su-

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perior powers of reasoning, to write and publish their sophistical and presumptuous tenets on the national religion. Let us ever remember that common but excellent maxim, that we can lose nothing but what would hurt us, and may gain every thing that is valuable, by receiving, with humble hope, the religion of Jesus Christ.

Upon the whole, and after all the subtle disquisitions of proud philosophy; all the inventions which owe their origin to malice, vanity, or ingenuity; all the whimsical modes of living and thinking which fashion dictates for the employment of her idle hours, or for the gratification of her full-blown pride; the plain virtues, as they are understood by plain men of honest hearts and good faculties, improved by a competent education, are the best security for comfort under all the circumstances, and all situations of human life. Sedentary and recluse persons may amuse themselves, in the reveries of inactivity, with speculative refinement and sceptical subtleties; but they who are really wise, and earnestly wish to obtain the happiness of which they are capable in this sublunary state, must descend from the elevated regions of sophistry, and labour to acquire, with the assistance of common sense and common honesty, the virtues of faith, humility, piety, and benevolence.

I am happy in the opportunity of adding my testimony, inconsiderable as it may be esteemed, that all plans of conduct, and prospects of happiness, independent of these virtues, must terminate in vanity and vexation; and that these will supply a perennial fountain of such consolation as the world can neither give nor take away.

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WINTER EVENINGS;

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

(BY THE AUTHOR.)

THIS book was first published without a name, not from any reluctance to avow the sentiments it contained; but partly from an unwillingness to obtrude a name frequently on public notice, and partly from a desire to collect the opinions of readers uninfluenced by prepossession, either favourable or unfavourable. But in an age of restless inquiry, an author whose book is so fortunate as to be read, will in vain hope to remain concealed. My secret, unimportant as it was, and though never divulged by me, was soon discovered; and the Winter Evenings were no less confidently attributed to their real author, than if they had borne his name on their title-page.

I have great reason to be well satisfied with their reception. They have had the most honourable testimony in their favour, a very extensive circulation, unaided by the artifices of praise, and the influence of party. Their success has operated as an encouragement to improve and augment them. I have revised all the papers, and added many new ones; to make room for which, some have been obliged to recede from their place.

The division into books and chapters, which I had

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adopted in imitation of Aulus Gellius, whose attic nights first suggested the idea of the Winter Evenings, has been superseded in this edition, because it had the appearance of more formality than such miscellanies require, and was not attended with any peculiar convenience.

These are the principal alterations; and they are such as, I doubt not, the reader will approve. For freedom of remark on all the subjects which have fallen under my consideration, I believe, I need make no apology to the public at large; however a few individuals, viewing objects through the prejudices of a party, a profession, a college; or actuated by envy, anger, pride, and personal dislike, may be offended by it. I am unconscious of having written one personal invective; and with respect to the liberty of general censure, a writer cannot deserve to be read, who composes with the shackles of fear about him, armed at all points with selfish caution, and consulting little but his own interest and security. How would such cowardice be treated in the army? and shall it find an asylum in the church, and in the academic cloister!

If I have written freely, I have set my name to what I have written, and am not inclined to shrink from the consequences. I may be traduced by calumny, injured by insidious malice, and insulted by the proud man's contumely; but I can bear it, because I foresaw it. Such is the usual effect of free animadversion.

———Nec rara videmus
Quæ patimur; casus multis hic cognitus——— Juv.

The ingenuity of malevolence against a successful

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writer, is more prolific in the invention of fiction, than the powers of poetic genius. The lies of an angry detractor are more various than the colours of the prismatic glass, more fantastic in shape than the creations of a poet's eye, which gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. To combat them is to beat the air. Though the phantoms rise like the heads of the hydra, time usually destroys them; and to time I leave them.

I know my unreserved manner has raised me many enemies, both public and private; but I also know, and console myself in knowing, that I have not merited their enmity. It has, on the other hand, conciliated some honest friends. The freedom, indeed, of sentiment and expression which gives offence is, I am sure, in itself an honourable quality. Attempts like mine have been, and will always be, partially misunderstood and misrepresented. Success alone, even that share of it which the public, in its candour, has been pleased to allow to my various endeavours, is sufficient to excite the bitter resentment of the dull, the envious, and the disappointed. But I have done my duty to the public, in writing my real sentiments in matters which greatly concern the public; and in writing without that reserve, which, though it may promote the secular interest of the writer, militates against truth, honesty, and the liberality of an enlightened, philosophical, and philanthropic nation.

I think it a fortunate lot to live in such a nation; in a nation, whose general characteristic is sincerity; in which ingenuous freedom will be honoured with

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esteem, and where the unmerited malignity of anonymous slanderers will be compensated by the favour and support of honest-hearted Englishmen, who, above all the narrowness of local and professional prepossessions, honour truth wherever they find it.

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WINTER EVENINGS;

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

EVENING I.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the summer season, the warm temperature of the air, the beauty of a vivid foliage, and the smiles of universal nature, allure men from their studious retirement, and tempt them to roam in the sunshine from flower to flower; but when the days are gradually contracted, and the cold weather causes the swallow to wing her way to more genial climes, the butterfly to retire to a warm and safe concealment, and the leaf to assume the yellow and russet tinge of autumnal decay, and at length to drop from its parent branch, the man of sentiment sympathises with the scene around him, shrinks under his roof, and into himself; and seeks that solace which the sunny hill and the verdant mead no longer afford him, at the fire side, in the converse of those whom he loves or esteems; in an elegant and philosophical solitude, in reading, in writing, and in contemplating the productions of art during the repose of nature.

In a climate uncertain and inclement like our own, fine weather affords a great pleasure, and he who is not urged to exertion by his wants or passions, seems

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to acquiesce in it, and to require few other gratifications, besides the enjoyment of it unmolested. The mind is gently lulled by it to a luxurious complacency, and finds contentment in the Epicurean pleasure of a perfect inactivity. With a mind at ease, to bask in the sunshine, or to breathe the balsamic gale of a zephyr in the shade, is a satisfaction of the sensual kind, no less delightful than pure.

But when the mind is so well pleased without exertion, it seldom engages in study, or serious reflection, unless stimulated by ambition or necessity; and this obviously suggests a reason why books are much less required as the amusement of summer than of winter.

There seems indeed to be something in the garish splendour of a bright sunshine rather unfavourable to contemplation. One would almost conclude, that the powers of the mind, like vapours, are dissipated in the warm month, and concentrated in the cold. Heat undoubtedly relaxes the body, and causes an inertness which disposes the mind to partake of any diversion which offers itself in the open air, rather than retire to the laborious occupations of recluse study. Cold has a contrary effect; and therefore the winter favours the operations of the mind, and induces it to exert itself with peculiar vigour.

But the length of the evenings in winter, which renders it necessary to find some sedentary and domestic diversion, may also contribute to render reading a more favourite amusement in winter than in summer. Books enable the imagination to create a summer in the midst of frost and snow, and with the assistance of culinary fire, whose comfortable warmth supplies, round the parlour hearth, the absence of the sun, I believe the winter is considered by few as less pleasurable upon the whole than the season of soft breezes and solar effulgence.

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The student shuts the door, while the chill wind whistles round his room, and the rain beats upon the tiles and pavements, stirs his fire, snuffs his candle, throws himself into his elbow chair, and defies the elements. If he chuses to transport himself to warm climates, to regions delightful as the vale of Tempé, or even to riot in all the enchanting scenes of Elysium, he has only to take a volume from his book-case, and with every comfort of ease and safety at home, he can richly feast his capacious imagination.

I do not mean to depreciate the delights of summer; but as in this climate we have a long winter, I think it our interest to find out every consolation which the amusements peculiarly suitable to it can innocently supply, and among these I cannot but consider reading as one of the principal. The mind, the very soul, is deeply interested in this; and whatever touches the divine particle within us, produces a happiness, or a state of enjoyment, equally substantial and refined.

In the metropolis of a rich and luxurious empire, inexhaustible sources of amusement are discovered by the ingenious activity of those who seek their maintenance by exhibiting public spectacles, by supplying music, and by convening assemblies of the young, the gay, the healthy, and the fortunate. Perhaps the evening in London is seldom employed by people of fashion, and their innumerable imitators, in the silent occupation of reading, or in the tranquil society of the domestic circle; but in the country, those who do not devote their attention to cards, find themselves compelled to seek occasional entertainment from the shelves of their book-room; and even in the great city, many from choice, from habit, from confinement, know no better way of passing away an hour in a

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winter evening, than by turning over miscellaneous books addressed to their reason or their fancy.

For myself, and let the reader pardon my egotism on my first introduction, I must acknowledge, that, though I have no objection to cards in moderation, I have at the same time no taste for them. They appear to me too dull and unideal to afford a thinking man, who values his leisure, an adequate return of amusement for the time they engross. In a rural retirement, what could I do in the winter evenings, when no society interrupted, but read or write? I have done both in a vicissitude pleasant to myself, and as my inclination or my ideas of propriety suggested. In these employments I have found my time pass away, not only innocently, but pleasantly; and most of these lucubrations are literally what their title insinuates, the produce of the Winter Evenings. Let me be pardoned, if I have presumed to hope that some, in the various tribes of mankind, actuated by an infinite variety of pursuits, might spend an hour in reading, as I have in writing them, with at least so much diversion as excludes passion and vice, and prevents the languor of total inaction. I shall not presume to censure those who prefer whist, or the theatre; but some will prefer a book, and, in pursuit of variety, may sometimes take up mine.

As I am convinced that happiness chiefly consists in occupation, I will confess that the amusement of my Winter Evenings has been my principal design; but if, in the variety of my speculations, I have been led to treat of topics which at the same time afford improvement, I shall consider it as so much clear gain and as adding a real value to my production. Indeed, I am clearly of opinion, that whoever furnishes an intellectual entertainment, contributing to fill up those hours, which are usually devoted to relaxation, though he

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should not approach with the solemn air of a professed instructor, may yet add much to public and private advantage. He may occupy vacant minds, which would otherwise deviate into vanity and vice from the want of avocation. He may engage those hours which might become burthensome, or be injuriously and disagreeably lavished in busy and trifling impertinence.

But are there not books enough already for this and for almost every other purpose? Is not the world filled with books, even to satiety? Perhaps so; but the world is wide, and readers more numerous at present than in any preceding age. Education, both liberal and confined, is more general than ever, and likely to be still more extensively diffused.

The English language is the language of a vast continent of people, greatly increasing in numbers, and connecting themselves in commercial and all other engagements with all nations. English literature is of course the literature of America. The learning of England has long been flowing from the Thames to the Ganges. The authors of this island are in great repute all over Europe. So that if writers can produce works worthy of attention, there is little reason to fear a paucity of readers.

But granting that books are already too numerous, yet let it be considered, that a new book will often be read, when an old one, of equal or greater merit, will be neglected. Many old books of great excellence are become scarce, and the great number of modern readers could not so easily be supplied with them, even if they knew them, and valued them, as with the multiplied copies of a new publication. Many books, though they once had a great character, and are still found in libraries and catalogues, are fallen into deserved oblivion, and consequently a vacancy is made

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by their demise for an ambitious candidate to supply their place.

If new publications were prohibited, there is every reason to believe that a taste for literature among the people would decline. The love of fame and the love of novelty are the great incentives of both writers and readers. The profound scholar might indeed rejoice as he pores over the Bodleian folios, that he was not pestered with new works too superficial to attract his notice; but the liberal merchant, the inquisitive manufacturer, the country gentleman, the various persons who fill the most useful departments in life, without pretending to literature, would find a copious source of pleasure and improvement rescinded. Is the innocent delight and improvement of classes, both numerous and respectable, though not professed *literati*, to be neglected? The erudition which is confined to a few libraries, or locked in the bosom of a few scholars, is of small value to the public at large, and consequently, when viewed with an eye to the general welfare of society, of little estimation. It may be compared to a stagnant pool, large perhaps and deep, but of little utility; while the knowledge which displays itself in popular works may be said to resemble a river, fertilizing, refreshing, and embellishing whole provinces, through which its delightful meanders roll their tide.

Whatever the affected pretenders to depth and solidity of science may urge, new publications will always continue to excite curiosity in a country so intelligent, so inquisitive, so free as Great Britain. In every new attempt, expectation is on tiptoe to see whether there is not some improvement; and if she finds not all she promised herself, she usually finds something, or at least has been pleasantly occupied in the enquiry.

But if with respect to the present pages, it should

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be asked and answered in the words of the Roman poet,

> Quis leget hæc?—Nemo, Hercule, nemo
> Vel duo, vel nemo. PERS.

If this answer should unfortunately be a true one, I may console myself with the reflection, that my lucubrations will not be entirely useless; because manufacturers concerned in the mechanical part of a work must be employed, and the trunkmakers supplied. Why may not one waste one's share of paper, that will otherwise be wasted?

> Stulta est clementia—perituræ parcere chartæ. JUV.

One advantage will certainly attend the waste occasioned by unfortunate authors, since the consumption of paper contributes greatly to the public revenue.

It is with such affected jocularity that writers endeavour to put a good face on a disappointment, which none, who ever thought it worth while to write, could consider with perfect indifference.

The good opinion of readers cannot but be grateful to writers, whatever, in the pride of their hearts, they may insinuate to the contrary.

The philosophy, if there really be any such, which teaches an utter contempt for the opinion of mankind, is favourable to no beneficial quality, and conduces chiefly to the increase of that silly pride from which it derives its origin.

Though selfish motives of every kind should be removed, which is more than in the present state can often be effected; yet, whoever wishes to do good, and to afford a rational amusement, must wish to be acceptable, for without pleasing, he will find it difficult to profit.

I will make no pretensions to that superiority which considers censure and applause with equal insensibility. I confess I shall derive a sincere satisfaction from

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being well received by my reader. The present business of self-introduction may be a little awkward; but, before we part, I hope to obtain his confidence, and that he will not in any respect be the worse for honouring me with his attention.

Introductory papers have usually been more embarrassing to writers than those which succeeded them. Ceremonies of introduction are seldom pleasant in real life; but to write on one's self and one's own views and undertakings, however pleasing to self-love, is apt to cause in the reader a considerable degree of weariness. Lest I should fairly lull him to sleep on the very first Winter Evening, which would be an inauspicious commencement, I think it would be prudent to wish him good night, and say no more about it.

I will trespass on his patience but a little longer: I find it good policy, like some of my predecessors, to defend my title from the attacks of witticism by anticipation. I deisre therefore to give notice, like Mr. Fitz-Adam in the beginning of the miscellaneous paper called The World, that if any one shall be disposed to say, these Winter Evenings are cold, or dark, or dull, or tedious, that more fire or more light is wanted; the joke will be considered as worn out, that it will not be allowed to pass in currency, but be cried down, like coin too light, and deficient in sterling value.

With respect to my title, which is thus exposed to the shafts of witticism, some title was necessary, and that of Winter Evenings appeared sufficiently distinctive. *Attic* Evenings, which Gellius has anticipated, would have been too ostentatious. It would have led the reader to expect a greater quantity of attic salt than I shall be able to supply, and might have tempted him to say,

> Quid tanto dignum feret hic promissor hiatu? Hor.

I believe it will be best to say no more about the

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motives which produce these Lucubrations to the public eye. I might indeed talk much of a regard for the public good. But I am of opinion, that *pro bono publico* on the front of the house, or in the beginning of a book, is rather a suspicious circumstance. Indeed, it has been observed, that the motive of any conduct rendered most ostensible often operates with least force, and that the inducement studiously disavowed or concealed is, in the ordinary course of human actions, the real spring and the prime mover. The heart is certainly deceitful, and it is the safest method, if we would neither delude ourselves nor others, not arrogantly to assume any exalted superiority of principle, but to let good motives be evinced by good conduct. Whatever pretences I might make on the present occasion, it might appear perhaps, on a careful analysis, that a great portion of the moving principle consisted of mere vanity and a downright *scribendi cacoethes*. If so, though the infirmity of human nature may be lamented, yet the number of authors excited by similar causes will always keep each other in countenance. And, indeed, why should people be outrageously angry with a vain and poor writer? A man of a restless activity may, in pursuit of distinction, spend his time much more injuriously to society than in writing a foolish book. It is a consolatory reflection, that a book can neither trouble nor hurt us without our own co-operation.

Un livre vous deplait?—Qui vous force a lire? BOILEAU.

EVENING II.

OF THE TITLES OF MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

THAT ancient grammarian, Aulus Gellius, with a delicacy which may be deemed a little too scrupulous, is fearful lest the title of his book, Attic Evenings, should be considered as arrogant or affected, and

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therefore anxiously takes care to inform his reader, that his lucubrations were so called, solely because they were written in Attica during a winter's residence in that country. He is unwilling to let it be supposed, that he intended to assume the merit of Attic elegance or wit, or to allure readers by the artifice of an inviting and ostentatious title.

After making his own apology, he proceeds to censure the affectation of titles assumed in ancient times by the writers of miscellanies; and though his strictures on them are generally just, yet he too severely condemns some, which are not deficient either in a decent humility, or in the propriety of their application.

I think it may afford amusement to the English reader to view some of the inventions of classical authorship in that important part of a work, the fabrication of a title page. Many of them have been borrowed and greatly embellished by the moderns, in the hope of attracting notice by the first page; as the inkeeper invites the traveller by a gilded Bacchus, a Tun and a Bunch of Grapes, and the tempting inscription, "Good Entertainment for Man and Horse."

The title of THE MUSES, as Aulus Gellius informs us, was sometimes given to poetical miscellanies, by which the poet rather arrogantly insinuated that his work was peculiarly favoured by the inspiring Nine. But it was by no means confined to poetry. I believe, indeed, it more frequently occurred in history, where Herodotus had set the example of it, by distinguishing each of his books by the name of a Muse. Some critics acquit Herodotus of the apparent arrogance, and suppose that these elegant appellations were bestowed on his books by his sanguine admirers, in ages long after the writer was no more.

THE GRACES were the names bestowed on three

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orations of Æschines, to which the beauty of their language is said to have given them a just claim; but this title must not be imputed to the author's vanity, as it is reasonable to believe that it was the voluntary reward of the reader's approbation.

SYLVÆ is one of the most elegant, as well as commonest titles prefixed to the miscellanies of the ancients. The origin of it is the Greek Hyle; and the authors, who first assumed it, modestly intimated by it, that they had collected a store of timber or materials, which themselves, or others, might hereafter use in erecting a regular structure. The SYLVÆ of Statius are said by the critics to be more valuable than his finished compositions. In imitation of him many modern writers of Latin poetry have entitled the miscellaneous parts of their books, SYLVÆ; and our own Ben Johnson, alluding to the ancient title of Sylvæ, denominates some of his smaller works, *Underwoods*. He entitles his observations on men and things, TIMBER; which must appear unaccountably singular to the unlearned reader, and is in truth not a little pedantic. He adds in Latin, the following marginal explanation: The book is called, says he, Timber, Sylva, Hyle, from the multiplicity and variety of matter which it contains; for as we commonly call an indefinite number of trees growing together indiscriminately, a wood; so the ancients entitled those of their books, in which little miscellaneous pieces were irregularly arranged, Sylvas, or Timber-trees.

QUINTILIAN describes the works distinguished by the name of SYLVÆ, as struck out with the impulse of a sudden calenture, *subito excussa calore*, and assigns causes for the appellation similar to those which have been already mentioned.

If the name should be differently interpreted, and understood to suggest the pleasantness and variety of

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a wood, abounding with every diversity of foliage and displaying many a sweet flowret in all the beautiful wildness of Nature; SYLVA, the Wood, the Grove, or the Forest, would not be improper titles for a miscellany, provided it were of merit enough to answer the expectation of beauty and diversity which such titles might justly raise.

PEPLON, or PEPLOS, the Mantle, was prefixed to works consisting of detached pieces on various subjects. *The Peplon,* according to the description of Potter, was a white garment without sleeves, embroidered with gold, and representing the exploits of Minerva, particularly in the battles of the Giants against Jupiter; but though this was originally the only subject, it was not retained so exclusively as not to admit the embroidery of other figures which had no relation to it. In the process of time the heroes of Athens, after an important victory, were delineated upon it with sumptuous elegance, to be exhibited at the grand festival of Minerva, as an honorary reward of past merit, and an incitement to future. Hence arose the idea of distinguishing with the name *Peplon* such books or poems as described the atchievements of great warriors. Aristotle wrote a poem of this kind, and called it *The Peplon.* It comprised the lives and death of the most illustrious of his countrymen. Every history concluded with an epitaph of two lines. The loss of the Stagirite's Peplon is an irreparable injury to the Grecian history, and to polite letters. It may not be improper to add, that when the Greeks expressed their highest approbation of a hero, it was a proverbial saying among them, *He is worthy of the Peplon.*

But the word was not applied only to the *Peplon* of Minerva. It signified the external vestment of any dignified lady; and from the description of it, may be imagined to resemble the modern or oriental shawl.

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The ladies of Greece displayed their singular ingenuity in decorating it with the richest and most picturesque delineations which their manual ingenuity could produce: and the art of the weaver, the dyer, and the engraver, had not then superseded the fine operations of the needle.

The poet, therefore, who assumed this title, promised his readers every variety of the most vivid colouring and picturesque imagery. He called them to view a richly figured tissue, a mantle embroidered with gold and purple. I should think the title more properly appropriated to the works of the Sapphos than of the Aristotles, though Aristotle adopted it. We have, I believe, many ladies in our own country who could with equal ease and elegance produce *a Peplon* in its literal or its figurative sense.

A miscellaneous author of antiquity, who wished to convey the idea of great exuberance and inexhaustible variety, denominated his work KERAS AMALTHEIAS, or the Horn of Amalthea, which will be more generally understood if I render it THE CORNUCOPIA. The pretty fable of Jupiter's rewarding Amalthea, the nurse who fed him with goat's milk in his infancy, by giving her a horn of the goat, from which she should be able to take whatever she wanted, gave rise to this title, and to the idea of the cornucopia, which is now familiar to the illiterate. As a title it was too ostentatious, and savoured something of the vain pretensions of empiricism.

A Hive and a Honeycomb conveyed at once the idea of industry and taste in the collector, and of sweetness in the collection. It is obvious to conclude therefore, that the Greek word KERION would become the title of miscellaneous books; and if the books were merely compilations for the works of others, I can see in it no propriety. But that a man should compare his own

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works to honey, and invite the reader by his title to taste the luscious store, is a degree of self-conceit which may perhaps justify the censure and the contempt of Gellius.

Limon, or the Meadow, was a pleasing title given to the ancients to works variegated with all the colours of a fertile imagination. It affords the reader cause to expect flowers richly interspersed; cowslips, violets, blue-bells; verdure, softness, fragrance, and plenty. I imagine it to have been chiefly applied to poetry. I remember to have seen a small collection of juvenile poems by that polite scholar, Sir William Jones, to which he has given the title of Limon, in imitation of those ancients whom he admires with warmth, and imitates with peculiar taste.

To make these miscellaneous compositions, every title which could express a collection of flowers has been adopted both by the ancients and moderns: hence Anthera, Florilegium, Anthologia, Polyanthæa; hence also the Nosegay, the Garland, the Wreath, the Chaplet, and the Festoon.

Lychnus, or the Torch, another title mentioned by Gellius, sufficiently pointed out a book which was to diffuse light; but it falls under the imputation of arrogance, and, like Euremata, Discoveries (which Ben Johnson has adopted), raises our expectation to a dangerous eminence.

Stromateus, or the Carpet, resembles the Peplon. Pinax or Pinakidion, the Picture, conveyed an obvious yet pleasing idea. Panecte, though chiefly applied to collections of law, extended also to miscellaneous books of polite literature, and seems intended to signify something like the monthly magazines, as the word might be rendered in the modern style, the Universal Repository or general Receptacle.

Enchiridion, the Manual, or rather the Little Dag-

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ger, was a common title to works of small magnitude comprehending things of great moment. In its proper sense it was the small sword, which the soldiers wore constantly at their sides for personal defence against any sudden assault. Applied to a book, it signified a little treatise always at hand, comprehending arguments for occasional defence and constant security. The Enchiridion of Epictetus was a compendium of his philosophy, in a pocket volume, as a pocket companion, no less convenient to refute the gain-sayers, than a pocket pistol, to repel a thief or assassin, or than a pocket cordial, to exhilarate the spirits upon any occasional depression.

But enough of ancient titles. If Aulus Gellius had lived in modern times, I believe he would have considered the titles which he has stigmatized with the appellation of *Festivitates Inscriptionum*, diverting and absurd Titles, modest and unassuming in comparison with some which it would be easy, though rather invidious, to enumerate in the English language. Popular theology, in the days of the Puritans, exhibited some titular curiosities; such as, Crums of Comfort, a Shove, Looking-glass, Pathways, Ladders, Doors, Cordials, Jewels, and many others, which excite a smile, or would offend modern delicacy. Though most incongruous to the seriousness of rational divinity they are chiefly prefixed to religious books. I believe the authors were truly sincere in the doctrines they taught; but if they had intended to ridicule what they reverenced, they could not have devised a more successful expedient than the drollery of a quaint and ludicrous title-page.

That works addressed to the illiterate should be recommended by a pompous title-page, is not wonderful. Their sagacious editors know that vulgar minds are captivated by bold pretensions and warm professions in literature as in medicine. Since the artifice is an

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innocent one, and succeeds in recommending useful books among those by whom instruction is greatly wanted; while, at the same time, it is too apparent to deceive the well educated and sensible, it deserves not the severity of satire, though it must of necessity excite some degree of derision. For splendour and copiousness of panegyrical epithet, no age can produce a parallel to many of the curious titles and recommendations printed on the blue covers of works delivered to the expecting world in weekly numbers. Language toils in vain for expressions adequate to the excellence of the compositions, the beauty of the type and paper, and the superb elegance of the copper-plate. Grand, imperial, magnificent, unparalleled, are the beggarly epithets which the editors are compelled to use from the deficiency of language. All this is laughable; but it is found to introduce a Bible, or a System of Geography, or a History of England, into the family of some poor mechanic, who spends, on Saturday for an improving or entertaining book, that shilling which might otherwise be lavished in riot and intemperance.

In the higher ranks of literature, I know not that any peculiar affectation in titles is at present observed to prevail. There is, indeed, too much good sense in the age to tolerate either arrogance or affectation in a title-page.

The only rule for the regulation of a title is, what common sense suggests, that it should be concise, as descriptive of the contents of the book as conciseness will allow, easy to be pronounced, and easy to be remembered. A title-page may be compared to the portal of an edifice. Who would exhibit the magnificence of Grecian architecture, the fluted column, and the sculptured capital, at the entrance of a cottage? Pliny, who ridicules the inviting titles, some of which are already described, concludes with this lively exclamation: *At cum*

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intraveris, Dii Deæque, quam nihil in medio invenies! "But when you shall have accepted the invitation and have entered in, ye Gods and Goddesses, what a mere nothing you will find in the middle!"

A title may inveigle the unwary; but thinking men and posterity will form their judgments solely from the contents of a book; and if they are valuable, the old adage may be applied them; "Good wine needs no bush."

If books of repute have not at present pompous titles derived from Greek and Latin, yet public sights and public places and buildings abound in them.

Pliny and Gellius would perhaps be a little severe on Holophusicon, Eiduraneon, Panorama, Vitropyrix, Microcosm, Lactarium, Rhedarium, and Adelphi. It would not, in this learned age, be surprising to see a barber style himself on the architrave of his peruke warehouse, Phlebotomist, Odontologist, Chiropodist, Pogonotomist, and P. C. A. or Professor of the Cosmetic Art. It is a little affectation of no consequence; and therefore one need not exclaim with the Satirist,

> ——Non possum ferre Quirites,
> Græcam urbem,——

Indeed, the love of pretty and well-sounding names extends to private life, and displays itself at the font of baptism. The names of Dorothy, Deborah, Abigail, Bridget, Judith, Barbara, Prudence, Charity, Grace, Obedience, have given way to Carolina, Wilhelmina, Charlotta, Emily, Amelia. and Henrietta. Even the good old English, Ann, Mary, and Elizabeth, are elegantly converted into Anna, Maria, and Eliza. This great improvement of national taste, which is at present visible in the lowest as well as highest class, is doubtless, diffused over the kingdom by sentimental novels, where a Deborah, or a Bridget, even if they were of a degree of beauty, understanding, and goodness, approaching to angelic, would at first sight strike the imagination as

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—a shocking creature! Such is the power of Names! And I will agree, that it is very desirable to have a good name, and I hope to see the Emilies and Henriettas of the present day, deserve a good name by exceeding in virtue and good housewifery, as well as in elegance of taste, the Deborahs and the Dorothies, the Prudences and the Charities, the Loves and the Graces of our great-grand-mothers.

EVENING III.

ON SOME PECULIARITIES IN PERIODICAL ESSAYS.

The physicians call a medicine which contains efficient ingredients in a small volume, and of a pleasant or tolerable taste, an elegant medicine. Moralists, who are the physicians of the mind, have usually been endeavouring to render their prescriptions palatable by the form of administering them, and to present their readers with an elegant medicine, a moral cathartic, gilded to please the eye, and sweetened to sooth the taste.

He who writes on morality usually gives advice; a free gift, which is the least acceptable of all bounties, as, while it adds to our wisdom, it derogates from what we value a great deal more, our pride or self-consequence. The draught is nauseous, though salubrious; hence the writer endeavours to borrow something from art, to render it an elegant medicine. He infuses into the phial a little syrup of sugar, or a comfortable cordial, that the patient may not make wry faces, or throw it out of the window.

No form in England has been more frequently chosen for this purpose, than that of diurnal or periodical papers. Doctor Addison, and a few others, eminent in the faculty, made them very agreeable; but *repetatur haustus* has been so frequently put on the labels by succeeding practitioners, that the salutary cordial, the

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confectio cardiaca, though rendered as sweet as syrup, operates at last like a dose of ipecacuanha.

Yet every mode of introducing an air of novelty has been tried by the periodical writers. Allegories, Diaries, Eastern Tales, Little Novels, Letters from Correspondents, Humour, Irony, Argument, and Declamation, have been used to vary the form of conveying periodical instruction. These contrivances were successful, till the repetition of the same modes of diversification caused a nausea.

The Spectator himself talked so much about the dress of the fair sex, that, as tradition informs us, his readers began to be weary, and wished him to take his leave. What his animadversions on tuckers, petticoats, and fans, might effect among our grand-mothers, I do not know; but at present all such papers, though they may raise a smile, seem to produce little attention, and no reformation.

But though the modes of conveying instruction may lose their estimation by continual recurrence, yet instruction itself can never be depreciated, if it is founded on the solid basis of experience and sound reason; and perhaps the best method of conveying it, is that which is plainly addressed to the understanding, without any quaint contrivance, or laborious attempt at novelty of form, a contrivance and attempt which too often terminate in a disgusting affectation. In an Eastern tale, for instance, one may be pleased with the language, with the imagery, with the ingenuity of the invention; but as to the moral instruction to be derived from it, it would at present be more efficacious, if delivered in plain terms, without those visible and palpable artifices which are become trite and trivial.

Allegories also are now, from their frequency, more valuable for the diction and splendid figures which the fancy of the writer paints, than for their moral efficacy;

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which I believe in a lettered age might be better accomplished in a manner less indistinct and operose.

Evident imitation, if unsuccessful, becomes contemptible; and even if it resemble its original, it is still considered, like a good copy of a fine picture, as of very subordinate value, and seldom continues to please long after its first appearance. Diaries of Belles and Beaus, Extraordinary Intelligence, Cross Readings of newspapers, are now worn thread-bare. Indeed, every mode of humour, which the Spectator adopted, has been imitated so often as to have lost something of its grace.

But the plain and unaffected manner of uttering ideas and sentiments can never be out of fashion; because it is the very manner which nature requires and common sense adopts. Apparel can never be out of fashion, though the cut of a coat, and the shape of a shoe-buckle, may vary every month. It is the great advantage of adhering to nature in the works of art, that what was once excellent will always be so; what once gave a rational pleasure will continue to give it, like a natural spring, which, though it may not throw its waters into so great a variety of forms as the artificial fountain of the engineer, will continue to supply an exuberant stream, when the scanty canal is exhausted or the machinery destroyed.

Good sense, expressed in good language, interesting subjects of learning, familiarized to the curious, or rendered agreeable to the idle, cannot fail of being acceptable in general, though they should appear in the unadorned dress of a direct appeal to the reason; while, in the imitative garb of preceding writers, they are in danger of becoming ridiculous or irksome.

The compound names signed by pretended correspondents to supposititious letters in periodical works become nauseous by continual imitation. The Spec-

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tator has a great number of them, and they were entertaining enough for once; but who can bear, without exclaiming, *Ohe jam satis est!* the never-ceasing iteration of such as Kitty Termagant, Susanna Frost, Ralph Crotchett, Abraham Spy, Mary Meanwell, Rebecca Nettletop, Eve Afterday, which occur to me in a moment on casually opening a volume of the Spectator? Imitation of things so easily imitable produces only the flat and the vapid. It is better to communicate the sentiments intended to be conveyed by these characters and names without a veil, than with one so transparent and so antiquated, as neither to serve the purpose of a covering nor of an ornament.

The pourtraying of characters in Greek and Latin names, such as Curio, Gelasimus, Belinda, Opsinous, though a very convenient mode of conveying instruction, begins, from its everlasting use, to be rather dull.

It was at first a lively way of speaking an author's thoughts in an imaginary character. But the method is so common, that the natural way of addressing the reader is now more agreeable and effectual. When fictitious names were first used, the reader was sometimes, usefully for himself, deceived into an opinion, that a real character was concealed under the masque; but he now knows, as well as the author, that it is only an obvious imitative trick, used when invention is at a loss to diversify the discourse.

It is the imitation, for ever repeated, of mere modes of conveying ideas, which renders periodical papers of great merit rather distasteful. Good thoughts delivered in this miscellaneous manner cannot fail of being agreeable, when the reader is not palled with attempts to please him by mere tricks, which he has been so much accustomed to already, as not to be in the least pleased by them, but rather to consider them as impediments to the main business, the discovery

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of the doctrine, the main scope and opinion of the author.

The insertion of letters from pretended correspondents in miscellaneous papers is a convenient mode of expressing some ideas and characters, which an author could not so well or so probably express in his own person. It may be allowed for its convenience; but, when unnecessary, it ceases at present to please, because the artifice is visible, and no longer leaves the reader in doubt whether the letter comes from a real correspondent, which was originally an useful deception. The reader knows, that he who sends, and he who receives and comments on the letter, is for the most part, the same person; and if he looks at the signature, he may give a shrewd guess what is the subject, as the name is commonly a compound of the epithets or words which describe the character. But I must take care here (for *Cynthius aurem vellit*) not to lay down a law which will operate against myself; for, in the course of these Winter Evenings, I shall sometimes have occasion for a country or a London correspondent, and must solicit the readers indulgence.

Indeed the whole plan of diurnal essays has been so frequently pursued, as to be in danger of causing that effect which a satiety, even of excellence, is too apt to produce on human nature, one of whose strongest appetites is a desire of novelty.

But if affectation, and too servile an imitation, are avoided, there can be no rational objection to communicating ideas on any subject of morality, learning, science, arts, or taste, in short miscellaneous treatises. Modes may be disgustful, but truth and reason must continue to give satisfaction, whether communicated in the form and under the title of diurnal or periodical essays, or of long, just, and legitimate dissertations.

Dissertations and systems are properly addressed to

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one kind of readers; but not to all. They are improving and delightful to professed students; while to the general reader, they appear heavy and tedious. *Laudant illa, sed ista legunt.* They praise and admire learned and grave writings, but they read those which are more familiar.

Readers may indeed be subdivided into a thousand different classes; but in a comprehensive division they may be separated into the professional, philosophical and miscellaneous.

Professional readers, those who read either to qualify for the assumption of a profession, or to regulate the conduct and exercise of one already assumed, require regular and complete treatises, according to Aristotle's description, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. However tedious and dull, they must go through such books as furnish, in any way, stores of professional knowledge. Their reading is a duty. They must proceed in the appointed road, like the stage coach, whether the sky be clear or clouded, and whether the country, and prospects around it, be pleasant or dreary. They must drink at the fountain head, whether the water flow copiously in spontaneous streams, or whether it must be drawn from the well by persevering and painful labour.

Philosophical readers, those whose abilities, opportunities, and ambition, lead them to attempt improvements in science, must also penetrate to the *interiora rerum,* and cut through rocks and mountains, like Hannibal, in ascending the eminences to which they aspire. They are not to be diverted in their progress, by listening, like the shepherd, to the purling of the streamlet and the song of the nightingale, nor by culling the cowslip of the meadows. Their very toil is a delight to them; and they come forth at last Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, and Newtons.

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But the miscellaneous readers are certainly the most numerous; and as they form not only a majority, but a very respectable part of mankind, their literary wants are worthy of supply. They consist of all conditions, of the young and the old, the gentleman and the merchant, the soldier, the mariner, the subordinate practitioner in medicine and law, of those who hold places in public offices, even of the philosopher and professor, in their leisure hours; and lastly, though not the least numerous or important, of the ladies. A beard was once the mark of a philosopher; but in the present age it is not uncommon to see wisdom and taste united with a fine assemblage of features in the most delicate female face. Such students are not to be sent to dull libraries, to strain their fine eyes over worm-eaten folios larger than their band-boxes.

This being a commercial country, let us suppose the case of a merchant, whose education has been liberal, and whose turn of mind gives him a taste for the pleasure of polite letters. His time is much occupied by the necessary employments of his counting-house. He must write letters, attend the Exchange, and see company; yet he has a love for books, and wishes to spend some time every day in his book room. He goes to his villa in the evening, and remains there a day or two; when some weighty concern calls for all his attention. In a life of business, with little leisure, and with that little liable to interruption, shall he read folios and dry treatises, in the Aristotelian style and regularity? He wishes he could perhaps; but he reads for amusement chiefly, and he requires something which he can read, comprehend in a short time, and relinquish without weariness. What so well adapted as an elegant miscellany? and hence it is that the Spectator, one of the first books calculated for univer-

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sal use, was universally read in the mercantile classes, and still continues in high estimation.

"The Philosopher teacheth," says Sir Philip Sydney, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned only can understand him; that is to say, he teacheth them that are already taught." For the people, there must be a popular philosopher: and he must address them, not like a professor in the dreary schools of an antiquated university, but like Socrates, walking among the people, and familiarizing his doctrines to the understanding and taste of those who are found in the ship, the warehouse, the exchange, the office, and even the manufactory. Life, at all times, in every part, under every passion and every action, admits of moral philosophy. It is not necessary that there should always be a professor's chair, a pulpit, a school, a formal lecture; since at the table, in the parlour, in the garden, in the fields, there is occasion and opportunity for familiar instruction. A pocket volume, an Enchiridion, or a Manual, accompanies the reader in his walks, in his chariot, in the coffee-house, and in all the haunts of busy man.

Miscellanies indeed of this sort, if any thing but their own utility is necessary to recommend them, are not without the sanction of ancient examples. All works which bear the title of *Saturæ*, are miscellaneous. What are Seneca's Epistles but moral miscellanies? What are Plutarch's Opuscula? What Horace's Sermones? None of them systematical treatises, but popular essays, highly pleasing and improving to the people at large, for whom they were designed. I could enlarge the list by the Deipnosophists of Athenæus, the Saturnalia of Macrobius, and many works of the grammarians, or professed *literati* of early ages. Nor let the grave and austere despise them as trifling amusements only; for the mind is nourished by variety

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of food, the *farrago libelli*, like the body by a commixture of fish, flesh, fowl, and vegetables.

If a writer is happy enough to present his reader with good sense, with sound and just reasoning well expressed, his work can never be entirely antiquated; because reason, the internal man, like the external, must always continue the same. Men may be disgusted with the tricks of cookery, and sick of made dishes fancifully seasoned and constantly served up; but substantial food will always be relished by guests whose palates are not vitiated by disease.

That form in which the ides of a miscellaneous writer can be most clearly and agreeably exhibited, is certainly to be preferred; but every proper ornament of style and method may be judiciously applied, without having recourse to little arts which have lost their grace and power by being so frequently used already, as to be anticipated, and even loathed by the reader, who is apt to yawn over them and exclaim,

Tædet harum quotidianarum formarum. TER.

EVENING IV.

ON THE TENDENCY OF LETTERS AS A PROFESSION TO PROMOTE INTEREST.

SIR William Jones, whose early acquaintance with oriental learning and premature accomplishments in all polite letters, promised an uncommon eminence in the maturer periods of his life, laments, in one of his last publications, that the profession of letters, though laborious, leads to little pecuniary benefit; and that it seldom contributes to elevate, in the ranks of civil life, either the professor or his family. He therefore takes a tender leave of the beloved region of the Muses, and,

——— Desertis Aganippes
Vallibus, JUV.

offers himself a votary of wealth and honour in the

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profession of the law. He relinquishes the barren hill of Parnassus, and seems to be cultivating with success a richer field.

The first love is not easily forgotten; and Sir William, amidst his severer studies, still pays great attention to his old friends the Muses, and the public will probably be gratified with many flowers of Asiatic growth, selected by his elegant taste.

But what he so feelingly lamented is certainly true. The finest compositions, the most laborious works of mere literature, would never have made him a judge, or raised him one step on the ladder of ambition. As children admire the peacock's plumage, and wish to pluck a feather from his tail; so the great, who have sense enough, admire fine writing, and derive a pleasure which costs them little from the perusal of it. They read, are pleased; they praise, and forget the author. Their interest must be exerted, not to patronize letters, but to pay the tutor of their children at the public expence; or to secure parliamentary votes by bartering for them the cure of souls, or the dignified cushion of some rich cathedral. "Such an one," say they, "is an excellent poet, and I hear the poor man is in narrow circumstances; but really every thing in my gift has been engaged to the members for two or three boroughs, and the minister's list for prebendaries has been for some time filled with the travelling companions and domestic tutors of several young lords who will have great weight in both houses. I wish I could do something for so ingenious a man: but there is nothing to be done for ourselves in parliament without these sugar-plums to give away. The church indeed furnishes plenty of them, but still they are all engaged, and the hungry mouths seem to multiply faster than the douceurs can be supplied. I most heartily wish Mr. Bayes well, and, if he publishes by sub-

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scription, he may set my name down for a copy which he need not send me; but any thing more at present it is out of my power to do for him."

Thus the writer who perhaps has more ability, and who has certainly been more industrious than many in a lucrative or high political employment, is considered in the light of a mendicant, and even then dismissed to his cell, without reward, to mourn over the ingratitude and venality of the world.

To seek learning and virtue is one thing, and to seek preferment and patronage another. The pursuits are often incompatible; and let not him repine at the want of patronage who has been, in his study and among his books, when he should have been, consistently with the pursuit of patronage and preferment, at a levee or a parliamentary election. If he were to write successfully in politics, or to manage a newspaper full of falsehood and virulent calumny, he might get something, when his party should prevail in the grand contest for power and profit. But poetry, history, science, morality, divinity, make no votes in a borough, and add no strength to a party; are every body's business, and for that reason, according to a vulgar remark, to reward them is the care of nobody.

If he had employed his time in engrossing deeds as an attorney, or in posting books as a merchant or banker, or in driving a quill in the East Indies, he might have been by this time a member of parliament by purchase, and then, by voting for a number of years for himself, and talking two or three hours plausibly on the right side of his own interest, have sat down at last with a coronet on his head. As a writer on general literature only, in which all men are concerned, he would still have continued in his garret, though the whole nation should have been improved and en-

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tertained by his labours, and future generations may receive from them equal pleasure and advantage.

The lucre of literary works falls chiefly to the lot of the venders of them; and the most eminent writers, who have nothing but what their works bring them, would be likely to starve. There are instances, indeed, of literary drudges, who, undertaking mere compilations and low works of little ingenuity and invention, have gained a livelihood; but a man of genius can never stoop to such employment, unless through mere necessity; and then being in a state of servitude, and unable to chuse his own subjects, and the manner of treating them, his spirit evaporates, his fire is damped, and he becomes a mere hireling, seeking gain and disregarding reputation.

Publishing by subscription, in the present state of things, is a species of beggary. A man of that independent spirit which marks great abilities, had rather engage himself in a handicraft employment than crave the subscriptions of those who pretend to despise his book, however valuable, and though they cannot understand it, merely because it has solicited their reluctant contribution. Poverty, and a starving family may urge a man to ask subscriptions in this age, for it is certainly rather less ignominious than house-breaking, and attended with much less hazard to the person. But would not his time, his ability, and his industry, exerted in a counting-house or in a shop, have obtained a better reward for him, with less contumely? All I contend to establish is, that they who study letters, as mere literati, without a profession, will usually derive from them little to gratify their avarice or ambition. Sir William Jones's doctrine and conduct in relinquishing a life of letters for a life of business, are founded on actual observation of the living world, and the state of things in the present age.

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Many contend that there should be certain public rewards appropriated by government to literary merit. I fear they would be bestowed by interest and party either on very moderate, or on no merit; like some of the professorships in the universities; like the Gresham professorships in London; like doctors degrees; like many sinecures, for which the qualification consists solely in the ability to procure them.

Who in such a case should be the judge and the awarder of the prize? Contemporaries often behold living merit through the false medium either of envy or national prejudice. If a writer were rewarded by one party, another would from that moment exert itself to depreciate his character, his abilities, and his works; so that a man of real modesty and merit, who valued his fame or his peace, would often wish to decline the emolument, which would then fall to some bold and empty pretender. How much envy and detraction have been occasioned by the pensions bestowed upon a few in the present reign? A man who gains an income equal to the best of them in a low trade, thanks nobody but God, and his own industry, for it; but the pensioned, or patronized author, has an everlasting debt of gratitude to pay, is frequently doomed to unmanly submission, and surrounded by enviers who leave nothing unattempted to lessen his happiness and lower his fame.

Then welcome a competent mediocrity, with liberty and peace! Let the man of genius love his muse, and his muse shall reward him with sweet sensations; with pictures and images of beautiful nature, and with a noble generosity of spirit, which can look down with pity, contempt, or total indifference, on patrons who have often as little sense to understand, as liberality to reward him.

Milton was poor and unpatronized, and so was

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Shakespeare. A miserable pittance bought that poem which is one of the first honours, not only of this nation, but of human nature. But is it not credible, that Milton and Shakespeare had internal delights, a luxury of soul, which is unknown to the dull tribe who are often rewarded with pensions and promotion, and which many patrons, with all their pomp and power, would envy, if they were capable of conceiving the exquisite pleasure?

Let the republic of letters be ever free; and let no bribery and corruption prevail in it. Where patronage interferes, independence is too often destroyed. I except the noble instance of Mr. Dyson's patronage of the poet Akenside.

Writing, it may be said, made Addison a minister of state. It raised Prior to public employment from abject obscurity. Burnet, Somers, Locke, Davenant, Steele, and others in former days, owed their wealth and elevation to their pen. Their success occasioned such numerous competitors, that they injured each other. The public was often glutted. Patriots or courtiers found other ways to effect their purposes than persuasion and argument, invective or panegyric. The prevalence of corruption rendered the assistance of argument less necessary; but still politics are the best field for writers who mean only to serve their own interest, and to improve their worldly condition.

But no kind of writing in the present age is peculiarly fit for making a fortune. Auctioneers, dancing-masters, quack doctors, dentists, balloonists, actresses, opera dancers, equestrian performers, perfumers, these are they whom the British nation either honours with fame, or rewards with affluence. "He that can tell his money hath arithmetic enough" says an old writer; "he is a geometrician that can measure out a good fortune to himself; a perfect astrologer that can cast the rise and fall of others, and mark their errant mo-

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tion to his own use. The best optics are to reflect the beams of some great man's favour to shine upon him."

With respect indeed to employing abilities on general subjects of morals and literature, in which no particular party or sect is interested, one must say, with an ingenious writer,

"Whoever is resolved to employ his hours and his labour in this manner, should consider himself as one who lays out his fortune in mending the high-ways. Many are benefited, and few are obliged. If he escapes obloquy, it is very well.

"Triumpho, si licet, latere tecto, abscedere."

And yet such labours alone usually descend to posterity, and such chiefly produce permanent advantage to the public. Who regards the petty controversies of little sectaries, or even the violent struggles of public statesmen and politicians, after the lapse of half a century?

Happy then are they who, free from sordid motives, seek excellence without regard to its recompence. They will not be without their reward in the final result of things; and, indeed, their internal satisfaction is more than a recompence for the want of secular emolument and honour.

EVENING V.

ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF MARGINAL NOTES AND QUOTATIONS.

The laborious writers of the last century presented most of their works to the public in bulky folios, with a small letter, a large page, a narrow margin, and a great abundance of notes and citations. It was the literary fashion of the time; but the fashion is so much altered, that though the margins are now usually large enough to admit a greater quantity in notes and quotations than the text itself amounts to, yet you may

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read works consisting of many volumes without stumbling on a single quotation, or finding the uniformity of the beautiful page violated by one marginal comment. Formerly, as you journeyed through a book, elucidations in the margin attended your progress like lamps by the road side: but now, it may be presumed, books shine like phosphorus, or the glow-worm, with inherent lustre, and require not the assistance of extrinsic illumination.

That I approve of quotations myself, is evident from my practice; though I have not been without hints, that books would be more saleable without Latin and Greek; the very sight of which, I am told, is apt to disgust those who have forgotten the attainments of the grammar school. But if a passage which I have read occurs to my mind while I am writing, down it goes; and I have the consolation, that if it displeases some, it may possibly please others. Of one good effect I am secure: it has pleased myself; and I have honestly confessed, that my own amusement has ever formed a very considerable part of my motives both to write and to transcribe.

But seriously, there appear to be some just objections to the old fashion which crowded the page with passages from various authors, and interrupted the context by references continually occurring even to satiety.

The reader, it may be said, either attends to them, or he does not; if he attends to them, not perhaps being able sufficiently to regard two things at once, he neglects the context for the notes, or, at least, loses that ardour which he may have contracted in continued uninterrupted reading, and which probably would have contributed more to his improvement than any side lights derived from the commentary. If he resolves not to attend to them at all, in consequence of his opinion

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that they may be an impediment to his purpose, they might, so far as he is concerned, have been entirely omitted, and the book would have been a less evil by being of less magnitude.

Notes and quotations are often in languages unknown to the English reader, and then they conduce to no other end but to offend and to mortify him. I have no doubt but that many English books have been injured in their sale and circulation by the Latin and Greek notes with which they abound. Many persons of good sense, and well informed understanding, do not chuse to be reminded, on every page, of their ignorance of ancient languages, and are a little afraid of being asked by their children or others, the meaning of passages which they cannot explain, whatever sense and judgment they possess.

Notes and quotations are often inserted ostentatiously and improperly. Many authors seem to be more anxious in the display of their own attainments, than in convincing or entertaining their readers. A few Greek words, and a little Hebrew, conduce very much to raise the admiration of the ignorant or half learned, who know not with what ease pompous quotations are made by means of Indexes, Dictionaries, Florilegia, Spicilegia, Eclogæ, and Synopses.

It is, I believe, by no means uncandid to suppose, that quotations have been thus easily and craftily multiplied to swell a volume, and to increase its price. The artifice in this case deserves the indignation of the reader, as it resembles the fraud of the huckster, who, in vending his fruit, makes use of a measure half filled with extraneous matter, or with a false bottom placed in the middle of it. If the context of such writers may be compared to the kernel of the nut, the notes and quotations may be said to resemble the husk, yet, by a preposterous disproportion, the husk often contains a

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a much greater quantity than the kernel. Who can wonder if, in such a case, the disgusted reader throws away both the kernel and the shell?

But though something may be said against notes, quotations, and mottos; yet more, I believe, may be advanced in their favour. If a reader thinks them of little use, or does not understand them, it is easy to neglect them. It is true that they occupy a space on the page, and increase the size of the volume; but these are inconveniences of little consequence, compared with the pleasure and information which they afford to scholars and attentive readers.

A reader is often referred in the margin to another author who has treated the same subject better or more fully, or in a different style, so as to afford additional information or new amusement.

If the passage be transcribed and inserted in the volume before him, the reader is able to consider it without the trouble of recurring to his library; a pleasant circumstance, which saves both time and trouble, and which, I should think, cannot fail of being agreeable to the indolent student of modern times, who only reads on his sofa over his chocolate, or as he lolls in a carriage, or sits under the hands of the hair-dresser.

It often happens that the quotations constitute the most valuable part of a book, and the reader may then rejoice, that he has not spent his money and time in vain; which, peradventure, he might have done, had the author inserted nothing but his own production.

Though notes, quotations, and mottos may be very easily selected and multiplied by means of indexes and dictionaries; yet there is reason to conclude, that a writer who applies them properly, must have read, or be capable of reading, the authors from whom they are borrowed; and, in these times of universal author-

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ship, it is some comfort to a reader to know that his author is a little acquainted with ancient learning, and able to drink at the fountains of philosophy. Ignorance may sometimes wear the mask of learning, but not constantly. A shrewd observer will discover it from the awkwardness of the wearer.

The more numerous the ideas which a volume furnishes, the more valuable it is to be considered; as that garden or orchard is the best which abounds in the greatest plenty and variety of fruits and flowers. Some of the fruits and flowers are indeed exotic; but if the flowers are beautiful, sweet-scented, and curious, and the fruit rich and high flavoured, who can complain but the peevish and discontented? You entered the garden in expectation of the common productions of this climate, and you are agreeably surprised with the magnolia and the pine-apple.

The art of cookery has often been used to illustrate the art of criticism: and though many may prefer plain food, yet the majority will approve a rich cake heightened and improved with ingredients not necessary to constitute the substance of a cake, because, as the logicians say, they might be present or absent without the loss of the subject *(adesse vel abesse sine subjecti interitu;)* but yet, who could with justice blame the cook for adding plums and sweetmeats? Many have not a taste for such sweet things, it may be said; but while the majority have, and while it is natural, the cook must remain without censure. Let those who like it not, refuse it; but let them not condemn the composition, when their own want of taste is to blame.

While mottos and quotations are added with judgment, and in a limited length and number, they must be considered as valuable additions or pleasant ornaments; neither would I censure an author for inserting in his works curious and valuable passages which he

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has met with in his reading, any more than the traveller who adorns his house, his stair-case, or parlour, with the productions which he has collected in his voyages; they might indeed be spared; they are not necessary, like the bed, the chairs, and the tables, but, like paintings, they are ornamental and amusing to the fancy, instructive to the understanding, and, in some measure, prove the traveller's authenticity.

But while I approve of judicious mottos aud quotations, I must join in reprobating artful and pedantic writers, who crowd their pages with Greek and Latin, merely to exalt themselves in the eyes of the ignorant, and to gratify their vanity. The affectation and crafty accumulation of second-hand sentences on one side, is no less contemptible than the pride of many superficial authors on the other, who call themselves philosophers, but who scorn to light their tapers at the torches of the ancients; who therefore write volumes without a single Latin or Greek word, confidently relying on the solidity and copiousness of their own doctrines: Heroic souls in their own estimation! Some, however, with a detracting voice, will whisper, that the true reason of their totally declining to quote Greek and Latin is, that they understand only their mother tongue.

Quotations have been often misapplied by sceptical and infidel writers for the most dishonourable purposes, to give weight and authority to falsehood in the attack of the received religion. An historian, who has spoiled his book by endeavouring to explode Christianity, has been found guilty, by several ingenious answerers, of misquoting, misrepresenting, and mistranslating passages from ancient authors, whom he endeavoured to compel into his service as auxiliaries. But nothing is to be wondered at in one who admires Nero for generosity and humanity.

Quotations can then only be objected to with reason

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when they exceed in length and number, when they mislead the reader by misapplication, when they are neither illustrative nor ornamental, but inserted solely from the motive of pedantic ostentation, or some other sinister inducement. Objections to them arising from idleness, ignorance, or caprice, deserve no notice. They are justified by reason, and by the example of the greatest authors.

The English reader is usually desirous to see Latin and Greek quotations translated. They often disappoint him; because much of their beauty and force arises from the original language. Queen Caroline commanded Dr. John Clarke to translate the numerous and fine quotations in Wollaston's Religion of Nature; he obeyed the Queen, and the quotations were murdered by royal authority.

EVENING VI.

ON THE PERSONALITY OF POETICAL SATIRISTS.

Mr. Pope has introduced a harmony of verse, which, however difficult to invent, is imitated with ease. The close of the sense in couplets, and the frequent antitheses in the second line, are features so predominant that an artist of inferior skill, a mere *faber imus,* is able to copy them, and to preserve a very near resemblance.

His translation of Homer is a treasury of splendid language; and he who has studied it will not find himself at a loss for shining epithets adapted to every occasion. I detract not from his merit; for as the improver of English versification, as the introducer of a brilliant diction unknown before, he has justly obtained universal fame.

But that which is laudable in him as the inventor, cannot entitle his mere imitators to any great applause. They may be called good versifiers and pretty poetasters,

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but they cannot rank with their master as a poet, or an original improver of versification.

While they exercised their imitative skill on subjects not all injurious, they might obtain approbation for their excellence, and would certainly escape censure; but the candid, the moderate, and impartial part of mankind have lamented that they have stolen the graces of Pope's versification, to decorate and recommend a kind of satire, abounding in virulent and personal invective, of which the Dunciad afforded but too striking an example.

Some works of this kind have been extolled in the highest terms; but the extravagant applause was, in great measure, the ebullition of that unhappy propensity of the human mind which prompts it to rejoice in seeing elevated merit degraded by defamation. Divest such poems of their personality, their local and temporary allusions, and how small a portion will remain of real genius to recommend them! they would not be read, notwithstanding their glare of epithet, and their sonorous numbers. The wit is not substantial enough to support itself without personal invective.

It is usual with these works to rise to universal fame immediately on publication; to bask, like the ephemera, in the sunshine for a day, and then to fall into irretrievable obscurity. Sudden popularity is like a land flood, which rages for a short time, and then returns into its narrow channel lost in its original insignificance.

One of the principal arts of their writers is to secure attention by seizing the topic of the hour, by filling their poems with the names of persons who are the subject of conversation at the moment, and by boldly surprising their readers with attacks on characters the most respectable, or at least on persons who, from their important offices, provided they are tolerably decent,

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ought to be externally respected or exempted from virulent abuse and public obloquy. It is the interest of the community that persons in high stations, whose example is powerful, and whose authority ought to carry weight among all the lower ranks, should not be held out to the vulgar as objects of derision unless they are flagrantly enormous. If they have common feelings, or have been guilty of errors merely human, a veil should be thrown over them, for the sake of decorum, and of that beautiful order in society, which conduces to a thousand beneficial purposes.

But a spirit of levelling high characters and rank is one of the distinguishing marks of the present times. The tools employed by the leaders of indiscriminate attacks, are often such as are only fit for dirty work. Not satisfied with aspersing political opponents upon public grounds, they have dared to go farther; to enter into the privacies of family retirement for the sake of degrading honest men, and to spare neither age nor sex in divulging whatever envy and malice may have suggested. The poetical satirist has been called upon as a powerful auxiliary in the work of detraction. Some read and are pleased with verse, who would have overlooked the invective of humble prose. Good versifiers have been found ready to engage in this service, and the most exalted persons in the kingdom have been cruelly hitched in a rhyme, and thrown out to the vulgar to be tossed about by the tongue of infamy.

Every loyal subject, every gentleman, every considerate father of a family, every man of common humanity, is hurt at the cruel and approbrious treatment which the king, justly deemed the very fountain of honour, has experienced from the hands of rhyming satirists. Exclusively of all personal considerations, while this constitution is monarchical, the king should

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be honoured for the sake of his office, and for the sake of the constitution.

Great pretensions to good humour, mirth, and gaiety, are made by personal satirists; but the pretensions are a veil of gauze. It is easy to see, through the pellucid disguise, the snakes of envy, the horrid features of malice, the yellow tinge of jealousy, and the distortions of disappointment grinning with a Sardonic smile.

But as a veil is used, as diversion and pleasantry are promised, and as detraction from illustrious merit is but too agreeable to most men, personal and satirical poems are read, and, like wasps, do much mischief in the short period of their existence.

The pain they give to individuals who are thus burned with a caustic, yet are conscious of having given no provocation, is enough to render the practice odious in the eyes of all who consider duly how much a feeling mind suffers on such occasions, and how little right a dark assassin can have to inflict a punishment without an offence; and to bring a public accusation without coming forward to the public as the accuser.

The practice is injurious to society, as it tends to discourage the growth of virtue, and all honest attempts to be distinguished by merit. Such attempts of necessity render a man conspicuous; and he no sooner becomes so, than he is considered as a proper mark for scorn to shoot at, and for envy to asperse. A man may be afraid to exert himself, when, every step he advances, he is the more in danger of attracting notice, and, consequently, of becoming the mark at which the malevolent may bend their bows, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.

What a triumph to villany, profligacy, and ignorance, when virtuous, innocent, and inoffensive characters are thus singled out for that satire which themselves only can deserve.

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EVENING VII.

ON MODERN SONGS SUNG AT PLACES OF PUBLIC DIVERSION.

Every scholar knows that Bishop Lowth, in a solemn introduction to his Lectures on sacred Poetry, has inserted, in the first place, and as one of the most striking instances of the power of poetry, a Greek political ballad, which used to be sung by the Athenian liberty-boys at their festive symposia, and by the mob and the ballad singers in the streets and alleys of that celebrated city. The Bishop, after citing it at full length, suggests, that if, after the memorable ides of March, such a song had been given by the Tyrannicides of Rome to the common people to be sung in the Suburra and the Forum, it would have been all over with the party and the tyranny of the Cæsars. This ballad (Harmodion Melos) would, in the opinion of the prelate, have done more than all the Philippics of Cicero; and yet, though in Greek, it is not better than many an one sung in Cheapside in praise of Wilkes and liberty. It bears a considerable resemblance to several popular songs written by such poets as Tom D'Urfey and George Alexander Stevens, whom some future lecturer in poetry may call (as the Bishop does Callistratus, the author of his favourite song) ingenious poets and excellent members of the state.

That the bishop thought proper to select a trivial ballad to shew the force of poetry, when he was to treat of heaven-inspired poetry, evinces that he deemed ballads capable of producing wonderful effects on the human heart, and therefore of great consequence, and worthy to be ranked with the sublimest strains and even with sacred poetry.

I imagine there must have been a favourite tune to these words, which is now lost past recovery; for among us a popular tune and popular words are generally

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united: at least the words will seldom be long popular without a favourite tune. Words scarcely above nonsense have had a fine effect when recommended by favourite sounds; Lillabullero is an obvious instance, and many others might be enumerated. Lord Wharton boasted that he rhymed the king out of the kingdom by it. "Hearts of oak are our ships, hearts of oak are our men," is as good a composition as that of the old Grecian with the hard name, and I dare say has contributed to animate many a poor creature, whose unhappy lot it was to be food for powder. "Hosier's Ghost," "the Vicar of Bray," and "Joy to great Cæsar," had great weight in the times in which they first appeared.

But if political songs produce consequences so important, it is but reasonable to conclude, that bacchanalian and amorous songs have, in their way, an influence similar and no less powerful.

Music and poetry are wonderfully efficacious on the mind when they act separately; but, when united, their power is more than doubled. They are, of necessity, united in songs, and the effect is usually increased by wine, cheerful conversation, and every species of convivial joy.

I argue, then, that, if political songs have had such wonderful power as to lead on armies to conquest, and to dethrone kings; those songs in which the joys of love and wine are celebrated, must have done great execution in private life. It is fair, I think, to draw such an inference.

I proceed to infer, that it is of great consequence to the cause of temperance, and all other virtues, that the poetry of popular songs should be of a good tendency. For as songs may do great harm, so may they do great good, under proper regulation.

Perhaps we have not improved in song-writing so

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much as in other species of poetry; for the old songs are still the best, if we judge by that infallible criterion, popularity.

But such is the love of novelty, that with a new tune there must be a new song; and, unhappily, the composers of the poetry are less excellent in their art, than the composers of the music. The music is often delightful, while the verse is merely rhyme, not only unaccompanied with reason, but destitute of fancy, harmony, and elegance.

But they who can write neither good sense nor good poetry, can write licentiously, and give to their insipid jingle the high seasoning of indelicate double meanings, or even gross obscenity.

If they descend not to this degradation, they yet represent the passion of love in language, which, though mere common-place, renders it very difficult for ladies of delicacy to sing their songs without the blush of confusion. Nothing is, indeed, more common than to hear young ladies say, "The tune is delightful, but the words are nonsensical. We never mind the words, we only make use of them to sing the tune, without giving them a moment's attention."

The effects of a song ought to arise conjunctly from the music and the poetry. If the words are considered as of no consequence and unworthy of attention, it is evident that much of the pleasure, perhaps half of it, is entirely lost to the singer and the hearer. But though the young lady may apologise for singing nonsense, or warm descriptions of passions which her delicacy must conceal, by saying she does not mind the words; it may be doubted whether it is possible to learn a song by memory, and sing it frequently in company, without giving the words a very considerable degree of attention. The ear often corrupts the heart by the intervention of the lyre.

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And I think it probable that indelicate songs have done almost as much harm by inflaming the imagination, as novels and sentimental letters. I do not speak of songs grossly indecent; for such are certainly never permited to lie on the harpsichord; but I speak of those which come out every season at the celebrated places of public amusement. The music is charming, and the words are usually well adapted to the mixed audience of those places, but not always so well to the parlour, the drawing-room, and ladies' library.

I propose to the musical ladies, or rather to the music masters, that whenever a foolish or improper song is set to a pleasing and excellent tune, they would seek some poetical composition of similar metre, and of established reputation, which may be sung to the same tune, without any inconvenience, but on the contrary with great advantage, to the tune, to the morals, to the taste; and with an addition to the pleasure of all young persons who are educated with care and delicacy.

Where young ladies have a poetical talent, which is common in this age, I should think they could not employ it more agreeably and usefully, than in writing new words to tunes which are accompanied with such as they cannot but disapprove. It would be an additional pleasure to the hearers to have, at the same time, a specimen of the fair performer's skill both in music and in poetry.

I cannot dismiss the subject without expressing a wish that the composers of fashionable songs would take care, for their own sake, that the poetry should be at least inoffensive; for there are many most pleasing pieces of music rejected by respectable families, and consequently soon lost in obscurity, because the words are such as cannot be sung without causing some degree of pain or exciting a blush. This is not

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indeed a licentious age in theatrical amusements, nor in song-writing, compared with the reign of the second Charles: but still there is a disguised indecency which prevails in both, and which is probably the more injurious, as the poisoned pill is gilded, and as the dagger is braided with a wreath of myrtle.

But, exclusively of moral consideration, every man of taste must wish to see good poetry united with good music.

The best poets of antiquity wrote the most popular songs. Most of the odes of Horace are love or drinking songs. Anacreon has gained immortality by songs alone. Sappho was a song writer. Even great statesmen, as, for instance, Solon, wrote songs for political purposes with great success.

Many of our best poets also who have obtained the rank of English classics, wrote songs; but who writes for Vauxhall? The best writers of the age need not think it a degrading condescension, when they consider the dignity of music and poetry, and how widely their effects are diffused in this musical age and country.

EVENING VIII.

Ornes ea vehementius quam fortassé sentis. Amori nostro plusculum etiam quin concedat veritas, largiare. Cic. Epist. 1 Lucceius.

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia. Hor.

If you have been an ocular witness to an affray, a fire, or any occurrence in the street, and you see an account of it in all the newspapers next morning, though they should all pretend to accuracy and minuteness, you would find them all vary, in some particulars from each other, and from the truth, yet without the least design to contradict or to deceive; but different reporters of the same facts saw them at differ-

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ent times, or in different lights, with various degrees of attention, and reported them with various degrees of fidelity, according to the variety in their powers of memory, or their talents for description.

In explaining the customs and describing places, which they have never seen, there is every reason to believe that most of the historians are unintentionally deceitful. It is seldom that neighbouring nations can know with accuracy each other's most familiar actions, sports, diversions, and places of resort, by written accounts or oral description. Nothing but ocular observation can secure exactness. I was lately much diverted with an article from the great French Encyclopedie, quoted in the notes to Mr. Mason's English Garden. The word to be explained is bowling-green, spelt by the lexicographers boulingrin. "Boulingrin is a species of parterre," say they, "composed of pieces of divided turf, with borders sloping (*en glacis*), and evergreens at the corners and other parts of it. It is mowed four times a-year, to make the turf finer. The invention of this kind of parterre comes from England, as also its name, which is derived from boule, round, and grin, fine grass or turf. Boulingrins are either simple or compound; the simple are all turf without ornament; the compound are cut into compartments of turf, embroidered with knots, mixed with little paths, borders of flowers, yew-trees, and flowering shrubs. Sand also of different colours contributes greatly to their value."

Such is the French description of a Bowling-green sanctioned by the great Encyclopedie.

The celebrated M. Sorbiere, furnishes the following materials for an ecclesiastical historian of England, in his famous book of travels among us. He says, "that our chief clergymen, who have pluralities of benefices, make their grooms their curates; that our bishops

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horribly abuse their jurisdiction in their excommunications and impositions; that they are so haughty, that none of the inferior priests dare to speak to them; that they rob the church, by letting its leases for thirty years, getting all the money into their own pockets, and leaving only a small revenue to their successors; and that England is a country where no man is afraid of committing simony."

It would be difficult to obtain an exact history of the events of yesterday; how much more of those which happened a hundred or a thousand years ago, and in times when the art of manual writing was not common, and men were prone to transmit to posterity by tradition, the dreams of the night, and the imaginations of their idle hours, as real and authentic history.

Those who wrote in the earlier periods, finding a dearth of materials, from the deficiency of written documents, sought in the powers of invention what they could not find in the archives of their country. A book was to be made, and it was to be entertaining. The *terra incognita* was therefore supplied with woods and mountains according to the will of the geographer. Hence the stories of Pygmies and Cranes, Gynocephali, Astromori, Hippopodes, Phannisii, and Troglodytæ.

Herodotus, one of the earliest historians, writes a romance under the name of history, almost as fictitious as Don Quixote de la Mancha, but not nearly so ingenious or entertaining; yet he is called the Father of History. He might as justly be called the Father of Lies. The Chaldæan history of Berosus, and the Ægyptian history of Manetho, are deemed but the forgeries of Annius and Viterbo. Sanchoniathon's Phœnician history is equally destitute of credit, if there is any confidence to be placed in the opinions of Scaliger and Dodwell.

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Thus the very foundations, on which the splendid fabric of history is to be erected are destitute of solidity. But they are usually strong enough to support the superstructure; which is too often but a paper building, a house of cards, pretty and diverting to look at, but of little use and value, when the entertainment it affords is deducted.

It would be a just description of the greater part of histories, to say of them, that they are historical romances, founded sometimes on fact, but capriciously related according to the historian's prejudices, party, or misrepresentation, and fantastically embellished by the false colours of poetry and rhetoric.

Writers of history are often in a dependent state, and are ready to conceal, or palliate, or exaggerate any circumstance or transaction, according to the wishes of a party, a powerful nobleman, or a king. The learned pate ducks to the wealthy fool, and the pen of history is often guided by an illiterate patron.

The histories written by different persons of different parties are known to represent the very same things and persons as laudable and execrable, godlike and diabolical at the same time.

There is a well-known historical instance of partiality recorded by Polybius, who was himself also extremely partial. Fabius and Philinus wrote the history of the Punic war; Fabius a Roman, and Philinus a Carthaginian. The Roman extolled his countrymen, and blamed the Carthaginians in every thing. The Carthaginian threw all the errors and defects on the Romans, and triumphed in the superiority of Punic valour, wisdom, and generosity. To whom was credit due? Certainly to neither; and have we no modern Fabii and Philini? Let us read the gazettes of different nations in a state of war.

When I am desirous of knowing real facts stript of

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fallacy, I look for them in some chronological table; but I read not a popular history. I peruse popular history, only when I am desirous of being entertained by composition, by the charms of style, eloquence, and poetical painting; or of being amused with observing the influence of party, or religious prejudice, on the mind of the writer and admirers. The real facts are the clay which the popular historian, like a modeller, forms into various shapes, according to his own taste and inclination, some to honor and some to dishonor. To some of it he gives great beauty not its own; some he throws away wantonly or artfully, and the rest he shapes into vulgar utensils; or models them into the deformity of caricature. It is a pleasing pastime to view his work; and men of taste and imagination are much delighted with his ingenuity. Weak and inexperienced persons believe him implicitly; others find real truth in him nearly in the same proportion as silver is found in a great mass of lead, or pearls in oyster-shells.

So little credit is to be given to historians, even in the recital of facts of public notoriety! how much less to their delineation of characters, and descriptions of motives for actions, secret counsels and designs, to which none was a witness but the bosom which entertained them? Yet many historians kindly communicate all. You would think them of the privy council of all nations; that they possessed the attribute of omniscience, though their intelligence never came from a higher source than an old woman's tale.

Your true classical historian never feels any difficulties for want of matter. When he finds it not, he makes it. He is a poet in prose. I scarcely need mention those fine speeches in the very best ancient historians, not one syllable of which, except in a very few instances, was ever uttered by the personage to

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whom it is attributed. Truth gives a faint outline; the historian adds shades and colours, drapery, action, and expression. He lays on the red, the orange, the yellow, the blue, the purple, the violet, the black, and the white.

Some writers in their attack upon Christianity have relied greatly on the representations of historians whose character were remarkably bad both as men and as writers; who also laboured under the general imputation of misrepresenting truth, like every other historiographer. Whatever such writers find against the Christian cause in the most contemptible historians, they bring in triumph, and are ready to sing the song of victory, or cry out *eureka* with Archimedes. But with all their pretensions to philosophy, they act most unphilosophically in giving implicit credit to wretched annalists, paltry tools of paltry princes, who are known to have fabricated a great part of their stories; and who, when they spoke against Christianity, saw it with the eyes of prejudiced heathens, or envious sophists, too proud to behold with patience a sect flourishing on the ruins of their own fame and dominion.

But it will be asked, whether what I have said against the credibility of history in general, may not be applied to the evangelical history. I answer, that perhaps it might, if the credibility of that history did not chiefly depend on its internal evidence. I never yet saw any external evidence of it which might not admit of cavilling controversy; but the internal proofs have a counterpart in every man's bosom, who will faithfully search for it, which gives it incontestable confirmation. The Evangelists and Apostles were fallible men like other historians; but the Spirit of God, which operated on them, and now operates on all true Christians, teaches the humble inquirer to find truth there, and there only, in a state of perfect purity. We may amuse ourselves

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with tinsel and paste in mere human compositions; but gold and jewels are to be dug for in that mine; and happy they who know how to value them.

I will cite one strong internal evidence of the Gospel History from the preliminary observations to Macnight's Harmony.

"It is remarkable, that through the whole of their histories, the Evangelists have not passed one encomium upon Jesus, or upon any of his friends, nor thrown out one reflection against his enemies: although much of both kinds might have been, and no doubt would have been done by them, had they been governed either by a spirit of imposture or enthusiasm. Christ's life is not praised in the gospel, his death is not lamented, his friends are not commended, his enemies are not reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing is told naked and unadorned, just as it happened; and all who read are left to judge, and make reflections for themselves; a manner of writing which the historians never would have fallen into, had not their minds been under the guidance of the most sober reason, and deeply impressed with the dignity, importance, and truth of their subject."

There is then no history in the world so artless as the evangelical, and none which, from its manner, has so great an appearance of veracity.

But though this is not admitted for a moment by the sceptical writer; yet, at the same time, every passage against Christianity in antient historians, however suspicious their character, is triumphantly cited by him as a full, a strong, and unanswerable evidence in favour of infidelity.

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EVENING IX.

Cui non sit publica vena,
Qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, nec qui
Communi ferlat carmen triviale moneta. JUV.

THE common coin which is constantly in circulation among the lowest of the people, usually contracts a degree of filth, which renders it contemptible to the genteeler and richer orders, many of whom never touch it with their hands, or suffer it to enter their pockets, from fear of defilement.

There is also a common sort of wit, which, from constant use in the mouths of the vulgar, is become polluted. It is indeed, in its trite state, fit for none but the vulgar, and ought, like dirty halfpence and farthings, to be chiefly confined to their intercourse.

The wit I mean, I distinguish by the name of Common-place Wit. It might have been sheer wit in the days of our grandfathers; but is now, from an alteration in manners and customs, either no longer founded on truth and real life, or has quite lost the grace of novelty. It is as obsolete as fardingales, ruffs, and square-toed shoes. It is worn out, quite thread bare, and ought to be consigned to Monmouth-street and Rosemary-lane.

One of the most common topics of common-place wit, is a jocularity on the lord-mayor and aldermen of London, as great eaters, particularly of custard. It might be true formerly that they were addicted to gluttony, and it may be true now that some among them, like other men, have set up an idol in their belly. But gluttony is not now sufficiently confined to them to justify the perpetual and exclusive jokes on their gormandizing, as if it were their peculiar and inseparable characteristic. Gentlemen of education and patrimonial fortune have often been elected into the court of aldermen; and there is no more reason to

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suppose them fonder of eating when become magistrates, than when they continued in a private station. In general there is a refinement in the present age which does not allow men of rank and fortune to place their enjoyment in feeding to excess, though it may teach them to indulge the more agreeable luxury of eating with an elegance of palate.

I have known aldermen of singular abstemiousness, who would sit at tables covered with every dainty, and eat moderately of the plainest food; while hungry would-be wits, who were accidentally invited, indulged in excessive gluttony. Yet the would-be wits used to laugh with a grin of self-complacency at their entertainers, (as soon as they were recovered of their own cropsickness) for giving what they were pleased to call an aldermanic feast.

The common council and the city companies are standing topics of jocularity, on account of their achievements with the knife and fork. As it unavoidably happens that some among them are of low and vulgar habits, and of mean minds, as well as of mean origin, a few may be observed to compensate the poorness of their own tables, by gormandizing at a public feast, where dainties are presented which they never tasted before, or where the flavour of every dish is heightened by that fine seasoner to their palates, a consciousness that it comes free of cost. This, I say, may be the case in a few instances; but they are not striking enough to justify an everlasting repetition of jokes on the worthy liverymen and common council of the city of London.

Even if the jokes are well founded, we have now had enough of them, and let us not be overfed in one way, while we are ridiculing excess of food in another.

But not only the lord-mayor, aldermen, common-council, and livery, but all the natives, and all the in-

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habitants of London, supply the witlings with a perennial fountain of jocularity, under the appellation of Cockneys. Your true Cockney, one who was never out of the sound of Bow bell, is uncommon in the present age. No persons ramble more than the citizens, to Bath, Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Margate, and all other places of fashionable resort. Perhaps it would be better if there were more real Cockneys. Trade would be better minded, there would be less folly, extravagance, and ruin, and the Gazette would not be so crowded with advertisements. But the Cockney was selected as an object of ridicule some hundred years ago; and so he must continue, or else the haberdashers of small wit, and retailers of old jokes, must become bankrupts for want of stock in trade.

The professions, indeed, will supply them with many articles in their way, ready cut and dried.

The clergyman, in the ideas of these humourists, is no less fond of good eating and drinking than the alderman; and why should he be? since both of them are only on a level with the rest of mankind in this species of enjoyment, which is natural and necessary, and which, with respect to guilt or innocence, may be deemed a matter of indifference. I imagine that the idea of clergymen's eating to excess might arise from the ancient custom of keeping chaplains at the table of great men, where they fared sumptuously every day, and, perhaps, seemed highly delighted, though even then it was expected of them, that they should retire, as soon as the desert appeared.

But if the joke on the parsons was once a good one, it has now lost all its goodness, because it is stale. The parsons, after all, may console themselves, if the jokers can say no worse of them than that they love pudding. A piece of solid pudding, it must be owned,

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is in itself a far better thing than such witticism, such salt as has lost its savour.

Those jokes on the clerical profession which relate to formal dress, great wigs, grave faces, and long sermons, are now totally unsupported by the manners and fashions which prevail at present in the ecclesiastical world. The race of formal Spintexts and solemn Saygraces is nearly extinct.

The lawyers afford an abundance of ready-made jokes for little wits; but the jokes are so old that they cease to please, except among the witty fraternity, or among the vulgar.

The profession of physic is, perhaps, the richest mine of wit, which the witlings are able to find. Tye-wig and gold-headed canes are inexhaustible; but the physicians of the present day wear neither. There is the misfortune. The barren joker procures all his stock from the old stores of deceased witlings of the last century; mere rubbish and lumber, which would be thrown away, if it were not bought up and retailed by these second-hand dealers in cast-off trumpery.

The sects, as well as the professions, suggest a great deal of common-place jocularity. Presbyterians and Quakers supply a delectable sort of wit, which comes at an easy rate, being attended with no expence of thought nor labour of invention. But the Presbyterian and Quaker of the last century resembled those of the present but little; and the shaft of ridicule, which might have adhered to some of them, would now, in most cases, recoil on the assailant.

National prejudices are another copious fountain of petty wit. A Welshman is no sooner mentioned in the society of jokers, than goats, leeks, and red herrings occur to his polite imagination. A Scotchman brings to mind the Scotch fiddle, famine, oatmeal, whiskey,

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barren land, and want of trees: an Irishman, potatoes, blunders, bulls: a Frenchman, soup meagre, wooden shoes, ruffles without shirts, cowardice: an Englishman, roast beef, honour, honesty, courage, riches, every thing glorious and desirable under the sun.

Many of these vulgar characteristics might originally have some foundation in truth; but when the same dish is served up with the same sauce from age to age, who can wonder if the appetite for it should fail?

And now I mention dishes, what a feast of ready-dressed wit does a dinner supply? Suppose it a calf's head; then, Pray do you want brains? You have tongue enough already. A hare suggests the witty idea of being harebrained; a goose is as full of jokes as of sage and onion. The land of Ham abounds with salt, and I wish there were a grain of the true Attic in it. If you want sauce, you are informed that you are saucy enough already*.

In harmless converse, many levities and follies which arise from an ebullition of good spirits, and are accompanied with good humour, are not only pardonable, but useful, as they contribute to pass a vacant hour with a charming gaiety of heart. But in composition, all common-place wit is insufferable; and yet he who is acquainted with the dramatic writings of the age will recollect, that many comedies and more farces, depend upon nothing else for their power of affording entertainment. The drollery of comic actors causes them to keep their place on the stage; otherwise it would be impossible to sit at them without yawning or hissing. It would not be difficult to mention both poems and prosaic pieces of a sort of humour, founded entirely on ridicule of the citizen, the clergyman, the lawyer, the doctor, the Presbyterian, the Quaker, the Welshman,

* Vide Swift's Polite Conversation.

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the Scotchman, the Irishman, the Frenchman, and not displaying one idea which is not to be numbered in the list of common places. The humour, in its day, was perhaps good; but it is time to relinquish it when it is grown thread-bare; and I advise all would-be-wits, who have no other stock in hand but such as I have described, to get rid of their lumber immediately, and set up with as good a capital as they can raise, of common sense; recollecting the proverb, that an ounce of good sense is worth a pound of wit. I will add, that common sense will not only be a more useful, but a more agreeable qualification; for, to people of judgment, nothing is more disgusting than the importunate and impertinent vivacity of a petulant retailer of stale, thread-bare, old-fashioned wit and humour.

EVENING X.

GORGON, ICON, ET AMAZON!

Propria quæ Maribus.

THE Spectator interfered very much in the *(mundus muliebris)* woman's world. I do not know whether he did not condescend too far, in meddling with the affairs of the toilette, considering that he was capable of enlarging on subjects of a kind so much sublimer and more important. But trifling as dress is, he recollected what Horace says concerning the tendency of trifles to lead to serious evils, and gave it a very considerable share of his attention.

The ladies in his day were not so great readers as in the present; and I always consider his making them and their dress so frequently the subject of his lucubrations, an innocent stratagem to draw their attention to his book, and thus to allure them to the noblest speculations on subjects moral and divine.

But if he really thought the dress of the ladies of great importance, and had lived in the present age, a

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great part of his papers must have been devoted to the subject.

I think it is easy to collect, from what he has written, that he would have highly disapproved the masculine dress for which the ladies in our times have displayed a singular predilection.

There is something so lovely in feminine softness and delicacy, when free from affectation, and not caused by sickness or infirmity, that they who endeavour to hide those attractive qualities, by assuming the air and dress of a man, must be considered as ignorantly defeating their own intentions to please. Taste requires a congruity between the internal character and external appearance. The imagination will involuntarily form to itself an idea of such a correspondence; and the lady who appears in a manly dress will at first sight suggest the apprehension of a deficiency of female gentleness and grace. This first idea may be superseded by any one who takes time to consider, that the dress is not, perhaps, the consequence of choice, but merely an innocent compliance with a temporary fashion. Yet as first ideas are in general of great consequence, and not always corrected by second, I should think it wise in the female world to take care that their dress, which they evidently study with an intention to render themselves agreeable, should not convey a forbidding idea to the most superficial observer.

Silks, linens, cottons, gauzes, and all the stock of the milliner and haberdasher, which I forbear to name, lest I should only display my ignorance, have a beauty, a delicacy, and a softness, characterestic of those whom they were designed to embellish. But broad cloth displays a strength and roughness, which is of a piece with the manly character. Notwithstanding this evident truth, nothing is more common in the present

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age, than to behold ladies of the utmost elegance dressed in broad cloth externally from top to toe. I do not censure the riding-dress, which pleads convenience in palliation of its masculine appearance: but the riding-dress is lately become both the walking-dress and the domestic dress. The habit has introduced the great coat, the surtout, in which a lady, buttoned up with broad metal buttons, appears much like the footman behind her carriage; and, indeed, when she drives her husband or her lover in his phaeton, she might very easily be mistaken at a distance for his coachman.

"But it is a charming, warm, and comfortable dress, and if the lady and her husband or lover like it, pray what right has any body to object to it?"

I believe it may admit of a doubt whether the men, in general, are pleased with it, any otherwise than as it is the fashion; and as they wish their ladies to be in the fashion, like their coats and carriages, their houses and their chattels. There may indeed be a sort of men who have given up their own manly character, and who yet think there should be a certain quantity of it somewhere in the family and so are not displeased to see it in their partners; but the generality of men, whatever they may assert in polite submission to their ladies, are naturally attached to them for female graces, and must disapprove in their hearts the least assumption of the masculine character.

However, let the broad cloth be confined to the use of travelling or going out of doors; I will only contend that it should not be worn at the fire-side. God and nature have made the sexes distinct for wise purposes, and let not the tailor confound their appearance. Convenience and warmth may plead for the masculine dress on the journey, but that plea loses its force in the domestic circle.

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Is there not reason to apprehend that the habitual dress has an influence on the manners? Is it not likely that she who constantly assumes a manly appearance, and a roughness of garb, should likewise display something similar in her behaviour? And may not her behaviour gradually injure her disposition; so that in time she will not only appear less amiable, but may be so? I express myself interrogatively and dubiously, leaving the answers to be made by those who, when they seriously consider, are the best able to decide on points like these.

After all, I am far from certain that dress is of so much consequence as the Spectator seems to consider it. It is indubitable that there are excellent and most amiable women, who follow the fashion in dress wherever she leads, without any apparent evil. Good sense, perhaps, may prevent consequences which would otherwise arise; but a mere aping folly in lower ranks and with lower understandings may suffer from things which in themselves appear innocent or indifferent.

Much of the severity on singular dress or new fashions, to which our eyes have never been accustomed, arises from narrowness of thinking, and from prejudice. So long as dress answers the purpose of a decent covering, and a warm clothing, the ornament of it may be safely left, I think, to the discretion of the female wearer.

Persons in high life, urged by the impulse of that pride which is as strong in low life as in high, will be continually endeavouring to distinguish themselves by external appearance. Those on the next step, quite down to the bottom of the ladder, will always be assuming the appearance of those above them. Fancy and invention are put to the rack to find out new marks unattainable, if possible, by the subordinate classes; and nothing keeps them so long distinguished

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as something very *outrè*, and apparently ugly and absurd. This accounts for very strange deviations from beautiful simplicity.

The deviations, however, encourage trade, and amuse those who have little to do. Let not the satirist therefore vent his spleen on the ladies' dress, provided they do not confound the different distinctions of sex by assuming the dress of men. I would forbid by censorial authority, if I had it, all beaver hats and broad cloth, except to such venerable matrons as time has honoured with a beard.

How much is continually said on the subject of head-dresses! It is unfair in men, except friseurs, to interfere in that province. The most elegant women, in the most classical times, adorned their heads with ornaments, which raised them so high as to leave it matter of doubt whether the head was a part of the body, or the body a part of the head. The dressing of the hair is called by a Roman poet, the Building of a head; and the English ladies have scarcely yet equalled the Roman edifices, though the painters of caricature have been outrageously severe upon them.

Moralists may certainly find better employment than that of censuring modes of ornament, which are the natural effects of female instinct; if the old Grecian's definition of a woman, of which the Spectator is so fond, be a just one, that she is an animal delighting in finery.

EVENING XI.

ON THE CHARACTER OF DOCTOR JOHNSON AND THE ABUSE OF BIOGRAPHY.

The illustrious character of Pierre de Corneille, the popular dramatic poet of France, induced those who approached him to expect something in his manners, address, and conversation above the common level. They

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were disappointed; and, in a thousand similar instances, a similar disappointment has taken place.

The friends of Corneille, as was natural enough, were uneasy at finding people express their disappointment after an interview with him. They wished him to appear as respectable when near as when at a distance; in a personal intimacy, as in the regions of fame. They took the liberty of mentioning to him his defects, his awkward address, his ungentleman-like behaviour. Corneille heard the enumeration of his faults with great patience; and, when it was concluded, said, with a smile, and with a just confidence in himself: "All this may be very true; but, notwithstanding all this, I am still Pierre de Corneille."

The numberless defects, infirmities, faults and disagreeable qualities, which the friends of Dr. Johnson have brought to public light, were chiefly what, in less conspicuous men, would be passed over as foibles or excused as mere peccadillos; and however his enemies may triumph in the exposure, I think he might, if he were alive, imitate Corneille and say: "Notwithstanding all this, I am still Samuel Johnson."

Few men could stand so fiery a trial as he has done. His gold has been put into the furnace, and, considering the violence of the fire, and the frequent repetition of the process, the quantity of dross and alloy is inconsiderable. Let him be considered not absolutely but comparatively: and let those who are disgusted with him, ask themselves, whether their own characters, or those they most admire, would not exhibit some deformity, if they were to be analysed with a minute and anxious curiosity. The private conversation of Johnson, the caprice of momentary ill-humour, the weakness of disease, the common infirmities of human nature, have been presented to the public, without those alleviating circumstances which probably at-

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tended them. And where is the man that has not foibles, weaknesses, follies, and defects of some kind? And where is the man that has greater virtues, greater abilities, more useful labours, to put into the opposite scale against his defects than Dr. Johnson?

Biography is every day descending from its dignity. Instead of an instructive recital, it is becoming an instrument to the mere gratification of an impertinent, not to say a malignant, curiosity. There are certain foibles and weaknesses, which should be shut up in the coffin with the poor reliques of fallen humanity. Wherever the greater part of a character is shining, the few blemishes should be covered with the pall.

I am apprehensive that the custom of exposing the nakedness of eminent men to every eye, will have an unfavourable influence on virtue. It may teach men to fear celebrity; and, by extinguishing the desire of fame and posthumous glory, destroy one powerful motive to excellence.

I think there is reason to fear lest the moral writings of Johnson should lose something of their effect by this unfortunate degradation. To prevent so mischievous a consequence of his friends communications, I wish his readers to consider the old saying, that no man is wise at all times; and to reflect that reason and argument do not lose any thing of their value from the errors and foibles of a writer's conduct. Let them also remember the old complaint, that many see and approve the better part, while from the violence of passion they pursue the worse.

Is it to be believed that the greatest men in all history, would have appeared almost uniformly great, if the taste of their age, and the communicative disposition of their intimate friends had published their private conversation, the secrets of their closets and of their chambers?

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It was usual to write the lives of great men *con amore*, with affection for them, and there ran a vein of panegyric with the narrative. Writer and reader agreed in loving the character, and the reader's love was increased and confirmed by the writer's representation. An ardour of imitation was thus excited, and the hero of the story placed, without one dissenting voice, in some honourable nich in the temple of Fame. But this biographical anatomy, in minutely dissecting parts, destroys the beauty of the whole; just as in cutting up the most comely body, many loathsome objects are presented to the eye, and the beautiful form is utterly disfigured.

It is said indeed that not only truth, but the whole truth, should be published and left naked for the contemplation of mankind; for as the anatomy of the body contributes to the benefit of human nature, by promoting medical and chirurgical knowledge; so the dissection of characters tends to the developement of error, which, by being thus exposed, may be avoided.

From such an exposure some advantage may be derived to the philosopher; but I fear little to the multitude. I am rather induced to believe, that the abasement of great characters, and the exposure of defect, prevents the salutary operation of their good example, and of their writings. The common reader seldom makes refined and philosophical observation. But he says, if such men, so learned, so great, so celebrated, were guilty of this failing, or remarkable for that misconduct, how can I attempt, with hope of success, to avoid it? He gives up the contest, and shelters his surrender under the name and authority of the defunct philosopher, whom he once admired, and, while he admired, endeavoured to imitate.

I think it was Ægypt in which a tribunal was

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established, to sit in judgment on the departed. Johnson has been tried with as accurate an investigation of circumstances as if he had been judicially arraigned on the banks of the Nile.

It does not appear that the witnesses were partial The sentence of the public, according to their testimony, has rather lowered him; but time will replace him where he was, and where he ought to be, notwithstanding all his errors and infirmities, high in the ranks of Fame. Posterity will forgive his roughness of manner, his apparent superstition, his mistakes in making his will, his prejudices against Whigs and the Scotch, and will remember his Dictionary, his moral writings, his biography, his manly vigour of thought, his piety, and his charity. They will make allowances for morbid melancholy; for a life, a great part of which was spent in extreme indigence and labour, and the rest, by a sudden transition, in the midst of comparative affluence, flattery, obsequiousness, submission, and universal renown.

The number of writers who have discussed the life, character, and writings of Johnson, is alone sufficient to evince that the public feels him to be a great man, and it will not be easy to write him down through mistaken friendship or declared enmity. He was indeed a great man; but mortal man, however well he may deserve the epithet, Great, comparatively, is absolutely, but a little being; and the example of Johnson is an additional proof of this obvious, but humiliating conclusion. I wish nevertheless, that his life had been written in the manner of the French *Eloges*, and with the affection and reverence due to supereminent merit.

Many of his apparent friends, one may suppose, were of those who forced themselves into his company and acquaintance in order to gain credit, and gratify their own vanity. They seem to have had little cordiality

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for him, and no objection to lower his fame, if they could raise their own names to eminence on the ruins. Many of them had, perhaps, been hurt by his freedom of rebuke, and were glad to gratify revenge when retaliation was out of his power. If he were alive, he would crush the swarms of insects that have attacked his character, and with one sarcastic blow, flap them into non-existence.

EVENING XII.

ON THE REAL AND PRETENDED MOTIVES OF WRITERS.

REAL diamonds and gold are rare, concealed under the earth, or in the beds of rivers; but perhaps truth, as it is more valuable than diamonds and gold, is also more difficult to be found in a state of perfect and unsullied purity. A man scarcely knows the truth of his own mind, his own avowed and professed sentiments; so just is the remark of the Scriptures, that the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it?

Writers, frail and imperfect like their fellow-mortals, are very apt to deceive themselves and their readers, in representing the motives which impel them both to compose and to publish their lucubrations.

If you think it worth while to inspect Prefaces and Dedications, you will find many authors declaring, that their chief motive to write is a desire to inform the understandings, or to correct the morals of the world, regardless of themselves, whether fame or obscurity is to be their final portion. They are contented to withdraw themselves, so long as the public receive advantage. While the cause of truth is served, or science advanced, their end is fully answered.

If indeed man were a more perfect being than he is found to be in his most informed and improved state, we might believe that writers, who recommended liber-

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ality and public spirit with much strength of argument, were themselves possessed of those qualities in a degree which taught them to forget their own interest, as they sometimes profess, in their zeal to promote the welfare of the public; but few men are so elevated as to be divested of self-love. One writer may renounce money; but is impelled by fame: another may despise fame; but is actuated by the love of lucre. If a few have written merely to inform and amend their fellow-creatures, they must have been such as were remarkably elevated and enlightened by the pure principles of Christianity. Heathen philosophy and human learning produce not such moral heroism.

But what shall we say of those public-spirited writers who compose and publish with the liberal view of delivering us all from superstition, or of disabusing us of Christianity? They pretend to an uncommon share of benevolence, they are outrageously philanthropic, and, if their prefaces are to be believed, they mean only to liberate their fellow-creatures from the manacles of prejudice. But from the style of dictation which they assume, and the displeasure they express on being convicted of error and fallacy, there is reason to believe that they are under the influence of pride and selfishness; of that peculiar selfishness which leads them, for the sake of gratifying their vanity, and of obtaining distinction among those of whom they affect a contempt, to hazard the disturbance of the repose, and even the destruction of the human race.

There are doubtless many men who discharge the duties of life, in the civil and domestic circles, from a virtuous principle; and very often sacrifice both their ease and their pecuniary interest to the performance of them; but what man shall say, that it is his indispensable duty to write, and to print his writings, for the improvement of the public? Who gave him this com-

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mission? A man may have an inclination to write his thoughts, and he may also be impelled by the fine feelings of his genius; but will any man who publishes, declare that, in doing so, he has no other motive or stimulus whatever but the love of mankind? If he is a good man, he must wish that his productions may do good; and the hope that they will do good may have weight in prevailing on him to offer them to the public notice; but, I believe, there is commonly a mixture of vanity even in this laudable motive; and that, if he examines his heart, he will find in it a desire of distinction as a man of letters, and a love of literary fame. He wishes to raise himself while he serves others, and to buy distinction at the price of trouble.

And allowing this to be so, where is the shame or culpability? Since there is no evil in being impelled to do good and useful actions partly by the love of fame, why should authors studiously disavow that motive, and hypocritically declare, that they are impelled by no other principle than the desire of benefiting their fellow-creatures? Such pretensions are the mere cant of authorship; a flimsy covering, intended to conceal that which is no disgrace, since it is found to be the attendant of the most improved state of human nature.

I know of few better men, human errors excepted, or better writers than Cicero. But Cicero felt, and avowed, a love of fame; and has left it on record, as his opinion, that the best and noblest natures are the most powerfully actuated by the prospect of glory.

He who is sincerely influenced in publishing his sentiments by the love of God and man, without any commixture of pride and vanity, is, I must acknowledge, a much greater man than Cicero; and, if any thing can give him this elevation, I repeat, that it must be the religion of Jesus Christ. A man who is deeply impressed with a sense of his duty as a Christian, may

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be led to believe, and may, in consequence of his belief, shew, by his actions, that all his talents are to be used in the immediate service of him who gave them, in returning him praise, and in diffusing happiness among his creatures to the best of his abilities. But our gold has always a great mixture of alloy; and he who ostentatiously pretends, that the ore in his composition is perfectly pure, is in danger of being considered as an impostor. The very pretension to so much purity is itself a particle of dross, and a proof of a base mixture.

Let not the author, on one hand, assume the appearance of unattainable excellence; and let not the reader, on the other, expect or demand it. In the present infirmity of human nature, it is sufficient that good is intended and produced; though the motive is not entirely free from vanity or self-interest.

I think it would be prudent, if authors would cease to declare, that their publications are entirely the effect of a regard for mankind, without any wish for distinction or emolument. Such a profession, as it is not rendered probable by uniform experience of human nature in its most perfect state, conduces to diminish the credit of an author, instead of advancing it, and therefore causes his book to have less influence on those whom it was intended to benefit. It savours of empiricism. The discerning part of mankind always expect and make allowances for some degree of self-love in every act of social benevolence.

Many, however, are inclined to expect from authors, that perfection which they see recommended in their books, and are disgusted and disappointed at beholding in them the common frailties and infirmities of human nature. But if you expect the moralist to be uniformly as good as the morals he describes or recommends in his writings, then expect your physician to be always in health, or at least always able to cure his own disorders.

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EVENING XIII.

ON THE ABSURD AFFECTATION OF MISERY.

The vanity of man may justly be termed a Proteus. In the endeavour to obtain distinction, not only happiness, but even misery is sometimes affected and even incurred.

I believe it is considered by many as honourable to possess a degree of that sensibility which is too delicate to bear the common asperities of human life; and there is a stile of complaint which is thought pretty, and a sort of woe which has been indulged not only as a luxury but as an occasion of pride. If I might borrow a term from criticism for the use of ethics, I would denominate the querulous affectation of misery, the elegiac style of life. The plaintive tone of elegiac language, and the soft tinge of melancholy, without any real cause, are very similar to the conversation and sentiments of those numerous complainers who have adopted the querulous style, because they considered it as extremely graceful.

I reverence the sorrows of the truly unhappy. Their tears are sacred. But those who affect a sensibility which they do not possess, and act a woe which they never felt, are to be considered as ridiculous and reprehensible, because they make a mock of human misery, and sport with that compassion which ought never to be abused, and which was designed for the comfort of unfeigned affliction.

I respect the character of Mr. Gray, as that of a man of remarkable virtue, learning, and genius, united. But he was melancholy without apparent reason; and, I apprehend, not entirely free from the wish to be considered as a man endowed with feelings unknown to the rest of his race. Every man of genius certainly has acute feelings; but those feelings will lead them to high enjoyments, and will make life more pleasur-

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able than painful, if he will but submit to the guidance of his reason, and keep himself free from the affectation of singular misery. Pride, and an insatiable desire of praise, will indeed often cause, in the votaries of fame, pangs unknown to others, which cannot be reasonably indulged.

Many poets, professedly elegiac, have pretended to uncommon wretchedness; but they deceived no sensible reader, since it was evident that their misery was no less fictitious than their mythology.

The affectation of woe is chiefly among the softer sex, in whom it is sometimes supposed to have been amiable. Pity, it has been said, is nearly related to love. But the pity must be sincere. Affected woe will only exite affected pity, which is closely allied to a passion very different from love. Beauty in tears, while those tears are believed to be natural, must powerfully call for the protection of every man not destitute of generosity; but if the call is found to have been frequently made without sufficient reason, though it may cause the attention of false and selfish gallantry, it will not raise the sympathetic esteem of the estimable. She who wishes for such esteem, will be prudent in divesting herself of every kind of affectation.

I am sorry to see a taste prevail for novels which exhibit unnatural pictures of misery, and diffuse a love of the woeful. The novel entitled Werter, is of a bad tendency, and cannot have failed to have given the falsely delicate, the over-refined, and the idolizers of themselves, additional encouragement in the affectation of misery.

Mournful elegies, night thoughts, and contemplations on gloomy subjects, have a tendency to diffuse a shade over the imagination which causes in many a misery no less real than actual suffering; and they countenance more in seeking the gratification of a per-

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verse vanity by pretending to singular wretchedness. There is certainly a great portion of evil in the world, real and unavoidable, and it seems a peculiar degree of folly to increase it by affectation. Affectation will increase it; for we become in time the characters which we have habitually assumed. In this country, where the inhabitants are naturally inclined to a dejection of spirits, it is particularly wrong to indulge the imagination in giving a sombrous and dismal colour to every thing around it. It is greatly in our power to make the horizon of our mind dark and cloudy, or serene as the blue æther, and beautiful as the variegated tints of a western sky in a fine summer evening.

It is a question in philosophy, *An quicquid recipitur, recipiatur ad modum recipientis*, Whether whatever is received (or perceived, as it suits the present subject better) be perceived according to the percipient's mode, or powers, or degree of perception? and I think it may be often answered, when applied to morals, in the affirmative. There is absolute good in life, and absolute evil; but they both may be in a great degree transformed by the manner in which they are viewed and possessed. A sour disposition, operating like a chemical acid, will turn the sweetest cup into an unpalatable beverage; as a contented, placid, meek, and gentle mind, infusing sweetness into the bitterest draught, will cause the most nauseous medicine to be swallowed with complacence.

To enjoy, and to be cheerful, are duties. "To enjoy," says Mr. Pope, "is to obey." And though it is natural, and often unavoidable, to complain in affliction; yet to murmur, repine, and take a pleasure in complaining, while we have many reasons to rejoice, is irrational and ungrateful.

The sect of whiners, or grumblers (for it deserves to be stigmatized by no very honourable name), fur-

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nishes a very proper subject for ridicule. It is fruitless to argue deeply or very seriously with folly and vanity. You will either not be understood by them, or not regarded; but a laugh against them, is like an instrument which touches to the quick, amputates the excrescence, or pulls it up by the roots.

Real misery will, I hope, always meet with sympathy. Nature has taken care that it should touch our feelings, in order to extort relief if possible. But the affectation of it, whether in books, in life, or in conversation, must find a different treatment, that it may be discountenanced.

Great caution, however, should be always used, not to mistake real for affected misery. It is better that many pretenders to woe should be treated with superfluous sympathy and unnecessary attention, than that one real sufferer should be disregarded.

EVENING XIV.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF ANTIENT MANSION HOUSES.

It is not without concern, that men of taste and reflection behold the noble mansion houses of our forefathers either utterly forsaken and fallen into ruins, or meanly sold under the hammer, for the price of the dismembered materials. Where the hospitable hearth once blazed, and the turret bell sounded cheerfully at noon, the owl now screams, the eft and the toad crawl unmolested, nettles and briars luxuriantly vegetate, and not one stone is left upon another to tell that here dwelt charity, heroism, and magnificence.

As I was wandering over the site of an ancient Baron's castle, the very rubbish of which had been sold to pay a debt of honour contracted at a chocolate house in St. James's-street, methought I saw one of its ancient inhabitants arising from the ground, and venting his feelings in the following soliloquy:—

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"Accursed luxury, and false refinement! To you I must attribute the demolition of a pile which at once did honour to a race of worthies, and embellished the face of the country. It was built in a style of architecture characteristic of its inhabitants, bold, solid, substantial, and magnificent. Its gates opened to all the neighbouring gentry and yeomanry; and the threshold was worn with the feet of the poor.

"Here stood the chapel. Though superstition sometimes deformed the altar, yet piety and charity made atonement for her errors. Hypocrisy and infidelity, affrighted at the lustre of their awful forms, never approached the place. It afforded solace to age, wisdom to the young, relief to the afflicted, and pleasure and improvement to all the illustrious family and to all the neighbours. But, alas! during fifty years previous to the stone-mason's purchase of the marble pavement, it was used as a dog-kennel; it was defiled with every abomination; and now the very site of it is overgrown with hemlock and deadly night-shade.

"Yonder was a room devoted to the purposes of a dispensary. The art of medicine was but indifferently understood; but what it could do, it did, with a bounty and benevolence that reflected honour on human nature. Ladies, high in rank and fashion, condescended to administer the salutary potion with their own hands, and to pour in oil into the wounds of the traveller, and the poor destitute who had none to help him. Food, clothing, and instruction completed the beneficence of the pious matron; who appeared with a dignity, in these humble offices, the loss of which, no titles, no finery, no studied graces, no fashionable airs of grandeur can compensate. I know it is common to say, that such bounty is no longer necessary, since the legal institutions of parochial relief have interposed. But what is the cold assistance, the compelled charity of an

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upstart and rigid officer, to the kind and voluntary relief afforded by the rich and great, actually and personally applying balm to the afflicted? What is the attendance of a hireling nurse, to the affection of a mother? The bounty and beneficence which is now censured and ridiculed, arose from Christian principles, and did more to promote them, than all the controversial divinity of all the divines united.

"On that ample area rose the spacious and lofty refectory. The first view of it struck the mind with ideas of grandeur and nobility which the modern saloon, with all its elegance, cannot emulate. The oaken tables were laden with plentiful food; with dishes solid, natural, wholesome, unspoiled by the arts of foreign cookery, which, to please a vitiated palate, converts the gifts of God designed for the sustenance of man, to a slow but certain poison. A race of heroes and heroines sat at the upper table; and the honest rustic was cordially welcomed at the lower. The species of fine gentlemen, powdered and essenced, pale and languid, was unknown in those times, when effeminacy had not reduced the manly form below the standard of healthy women. I own there prevailed a bluntness of manners, which, in the present days, would be deemed roughness; but it was a roughness which led to generous acts in war, and taught a contempt of all mean and unmanly indulgence in peace. I will not deny that the polish of the present times is laudable; but is often carried to excess; and let it be remembered, that the file may be used till the substance it was to adorn is rendered too thin and weak to retain any value. Truth and sincerity, the best embellishment of a man, are often lost in the refinements of the highly-finished gentlemen of modern courts. But it is the province of art to improve and adorn, not to extinguish nature.

"The hospitality which prevailed in that Gothic

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hall is said to have encouraged gluttony and drunkenness. But, let it be considered that the food was plain, though plentiful; the beverage homely, though highly relished by the unspoiled palate. And let actual observation determine, whether gluttony, advanced to its highest degree by art; and drunkenness inflamed by exquisite wines and distillation, do not disgrace the selfish orgies of the modern feast. In the old times, the middle and the lowest orders were permitted freely to partake the great man's banquet. It contributed at once to their necessities and their enjoyment. But at the table of modern luxury, the superfluous viands are usually open only to those who are already satiated with dainties, and know no appetite but that which high seasoning provokes. There remains all the intemperance, without the generosity, of our grand-sires; all the vices of riot, without the virtues of charity to cover them.

"But allowing all that can be claimed by modern refinement, and I own that, in many things, it is to be preferred to the rudeness and grossness of less civilized times; yet I must bear my testimony against the prevailing practice of demolishing the noble edifices which the worthies of past times erected with a splendour equal to their munificence. I cannot bear to see the land desolated by mean avarice. I cannot bear to see the mansion of old bountiful families forsaken for the petty villa fit only for a retired trader. Taste, as well as manly virtue, suffer by such littleness when it appears in men, who are raised to distinction by the merits of those ancestors whom they despise." He was proceeding, when he was interrupted by the arrival of a smart young man, the lord of the land, with a pale face and meagre form, who sat lolling in his vis-à-vis with a hackneyed courtesan, drawn by four cropt greys, and driven rapidly over the site of the ancient castle. The

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venerable progenitor lifted up his hands and eyes with silent indignation, and then vanished in despair.

EVENING XV.

ON THE DESIRE OF DISTINCTION BY LIVING BEYOND AN INCOME.

Philosophers have often compared individuals of the human race to the various animals of the irrational creation. Some are said to resemble foxes, some hogs, and others asses; and the resemblance has been supposed to be so great as to contribute something to the support of the Pythagorean Metempsychosis. I believe the philosophers would not have erred, if while they were reciting resemblances, they had said, that a great part of mankind are like the peacock, which appears to take its greatest pleasure, and to place its chief good, in the display of its finery. As to the transmigration of souls, some have thought that so great an attention to the gaudy appearance of the body, argues something in these persons against the existence of the soul at all; so that I do not pretend to corroborate, from the circumstance of their likeness to the bird of Juno, the whimsical doctrine of old Pythagoras.

To make a figure, to the utmost extent of their ability, is the ultimate scope of many; as to expand the plumage of its tail in all its pride is the supreme bliss of the peacock; whose internal qualities, and real value (which by the way, are in that respect like those of the vain votaries of fashion), by no means correspond with the ostentatious appearance of the plumage.

As the desire of distinction is natural, so the wish to make a figure, even in externals, while it is limited by right reason, and urges not to the violation of prudence and justice, is innocent at least, though scarcely

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laudable. But it is found in this age to lead to an expensive mode of living, and to the affectation of a splendour greatly above what the rank of the parties requires, and their fortunes can support.

The house must be larger, the servants more numerous, the table more luxurious, and the equipage more splendid than either a sense of decorum, or a prudential regard to the permanent interest of the family, can admit. And what is the inducement? The hope of being received into company which assumes the envied title of people of fashion. The aspirants to this honour are indeed sometimes received; but if it is suspected that they make a show without much substance to support it, they are commonly held in low esteem; and the subterfuges they are obliged to use to conceal their inferiority, render the state, which, after much difficulty, they have obtained, truly uneasy. They indeed enjoy, in fancy, the pleasure of gratified pride, and are too rapidly whirled in the circle which they have chosen, to find leisure for reflection. But this is a state which no rational creature, who possesses the faculty of which he boasts as his noblest distinction, can deem desirable. And yet for the sake of this distinction, what sacrifices are made! Health, peace, and the plenty of a competency, are the usual price of the dear-bought purchase. Neither do these ostentatious people enjoy themselves sincerely; for they are conscious of imprudence and injustice; and however they may attempt to stifle the voice of reason, they will sometimes be compelled to hear it; if not at the assembly and masquerade, yet on their pillows, and in their chamber, when, after all their efforts to escape, they are under an unavoidable necessity of communing with themselves, and of being still.

The creditors and the children of the numerous tribes who live above their rank and fortune, experimentally feel and deplore that my representation is

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no fiction. Creditors wait so long for payment as to lose their profit in the interest, and often rejoice if they receive ten shillings in the place of twenty. Many of them have been reduced to beggary by supplying the vain with the necessaries of life; for it so happens, that those who supply superfluities, are often paid with ostentatious liberality and alacrity; while he who sells bread, meat, and raiment, is obliged to take out a commission of bankrupt, or sue in vain for his just due by a tedious and vexatious process of the law.

The children of ambitious paupers suffer cruelly. They are introduced into a walk of life which they must relinquish for ever on the departure of their parents. The money that should have been kept as a reservoir to supply their wants during life, in adversity, and in old age, has flowed in profusion to furnish superfluities in the season of health and youth. Their sentiments, habits, pleasures, and prospects, are all in high life; yet their fortunes are such as must detain them in a state of dependence, if not of servitude. But supposing enough left to enable a large family to live in competent plenty, yet, as they have been used to ostentation and luxury, that plenty which would otherwise have afforded comfort, and been considered as a blessing, is viewed in the light of penury and meanness; and that middle station, in which they were born, and might have enjoyed as much happiness as belongs to human nature, is deplored by them as a fallen state. Consequently, instead of feeling and displaying a cheerful and contented gratitude, they murmur and repine throughout their lives, at their unfortunate degradation.

I knew a family, the father of which had an old paternal estate of one thousand a year. There were five children to enjoy it with him while he lived, and to inherit it when he should die. But his lady was of

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opinion that he would serve his family most, by introducing them into company and life, and forming valuable connections. The truth was, she loved a gay and dissipated scene, and was but too successful in persuading her husband to adopt her plan. A style and mode of living were immediately engaged in, which would require, on the most moderate computation, two thousand a year. There was no mode of increasing the income, the father having no profession, and being above trade. The whole time and attention of the family was devoted to dress, fashionable diversions, and visiting a circle of neighbours, some of whom were East India nabobs, contractors, loan-jobbers, and lords. The conseqneuce was unavoidable. On the death of their parents, the children found that every foot of land, and all the goods and chattels, belonged to importunate creditors who, after having sustained a heavy loss, eagerly seized all the remainder of the property; so that they saw themselves, literally, not worth a single shilling.

They might, with much reason, be unhappy in their situation, as their hopes and prospects had once been so elevated; but their misery was much increased by their inability to render themselves useful in society, and to compensate the unkindness of their fortune by personal exertion; for they really had learned nothing but the arts of dress, and the expensive modes of fashionable life. Two of the sons were sent to the East Indies by the interest of a compassionate neighbour; one took to swindling, and, after a narrow escape, was obliged to transport himself; the daughters became milliners but being above business soon failed; when one died of disappointment, and the other sought dishonest bread in the misery of prostitution. So ended the splendour, the luxury, the pride of a family, which if it could have been contended with the comforts of a most valuable competency might at this time have been flourishing in reputation, plenty, and prosperity. Many

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similar cases occur, where the misery of innocent children has been caused by the vanity of unthinking parents, led astray by the *ignis fatuus* of vanity, aping the manners of high and fashionable life.

But what? is there no such thing as solid comfort with a moderate fortune, and in the middle state? Must we for ever labour to leave the rank in which Providence has placed us, in order to relish our existence? Must we be guilty of injustice and cruelty, in order to be happy? Believe it not. Things are not so constituted. But the votaries of vanity, though they may possess a good share of natural understanding, are usually furnished but slenderly with philosophy and religion. They know not how to chuse for themselves the chief good; but, blindly following the multitude, suffer themselves to be led, in the journey of life, by the false light of a vapour, rather than by the certain guidance of the polar star, or the magnetic needle.

I wish I could induce them to consider duly the nature and value of solid comfort. But we do consider it, say they; we consider what pleases ourselves, and we pursue it with constancy. Are you convinced, I ask in return, that what you pursue affords you pleasure? Is it not true, on the contrary, that you live rather to please others than yourselves? You certainly live in the eyes of others; of others, as vain and proud of externals and of trifles as yourselves; and in their applause or admiration, you place your felicity. So long as you can display the tinsel appearance of gaiety and ease, you patiently submit to the real and total want of the substance. I urge you then again, to pursue solid comforts, and relinquish vanity. You ask me to describe what I mean by solid comforts. It is easy to conceive them; but as you desire it, I will attempt the obvious enumeration, and then leave you to your own dispassionate and unprejudiced reflections.

Solid comforts may be copiously derived from the

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following sources: a quiet conscience, health, liberty, one's time one's own, or if not, usefully, innocently, and moderately employed by others; a freedom from inordinate passions of all kinds; a habit of living within one's income, and of saving something for extraordinary occasions; an ability, arising from rational economy, to defray all necessary and expedient expences; a habit of good humour, and aptitude to be pleased rather than offended; a preparation for adversity, love of one's family, sincerity to friends, benevolence to mankind, and piety to God.

Compare this state and these dispositions with those of affected people of fashion, embarrassed in circumstances, distressed by vain cares, tossed about by various passions and vain fancies, without any anchor to keep their frail bark from the violence of every gust. But it is not necessary to dilate on the comparison; let the hearts of the deluded votaries of vanity decide upon it in the silence of the night season, when they recline on their pillows, when the lights of the assembly are extinguished, and the rattling of carriages is heard no more.

EVENING XVI.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF TRADESMEN AND PERSONS LONG USED TO BUSINESS AND ACTION, TO RURAL LIFE AND THE EMPLOYMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

The pleasures of rural life form one of the commonplaces of the poets, and they have adorned it with the richest colours of fanciful description. He who believes their representations, will deem nothing more conducive to his happiness, than to fly to the remotest wilds, to forests dark with shade, to rivulets gliding over pebbles, to plains clothed with verdure, covered with flocks, and resounding with the shepherd's pipe. That pastoral poets should indulge in such luxuriant descrip-

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tions, is not wonderful: but even Horace, a man of the world and the poet of common sense, has, in some passages, yielded to the delusion, and endeavoured to extend it.

The employments of agriculture, and the life of the husbandman, have been also described by the poets, to use the language of Addison on another occasion, as

Profuse of bliss and pregnant with delight.

Under these two prepossessions, the one in favour of rural felicity, and the other of the joys of farming; the man of business in town, whether professional or commercial, has toiled for gain, with the hope of retiring into the country in middle or declining life; which he indulges with no less ardour, than if he were going into Elysium on the day of his long-wished-for retreat from Cheapside.

But the blaze which imagination kindled has been extinguished on approaching it; the vision of happiness has vanished like a dream, on hastening to its actual enjoyment.

It is natural to enquire into the cause of the disappointment. Rural delights are certainly great; though exaggerated by the poets' fancy. Rural employments are certainly natural, amusing, and healthy; though extolled too highly, when represented as furnishing delight unalloyed with vexation.

Persons who retire to rural life raise their expectations too high, above the pitch which human enjoyments are ever found to attain. A golden age, when the earth brought forth her fruits with spontaneous exuberance, must be revived to satisfy the ideas of felicity which they have connected with the operations of agriculture.

Success in farming, and without success there can be no pleasure in it, depends on the labours of those who are commonly unwilling to labour hard for a gentle-

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man, or man of fortune, and who, under the appearance of rustic simplicity, conceal a low cunning scarcely compatible with honesty. The defective work, the exorbitant demands, the discontented dispositions of these persons, soon give a very different idea of rural swains, hinds, and shepherds, than was received from the poets. These alone are able to convince a man of his error who retires to a farm as to an occupation of uninterrupted tranquillity. Though his circumstances should be such as cannot be affected by their injurious treatment, yet his temper will probably be tried by their perverse behaviour. He may not be deeply wounded; but his ease will be effectually destroyed for a time, though he should be only scratched by a bramble, or pricked by a thorn.

Inclement weather and unfavourable seasons, combining with improper management, render the produce of the farm, after great expence and no little solicitude, scanty and ill-conditioned. The object, in a lucrative view, is perhaps inconsiderable; but disappointment even in trifles, when the heart is set upon them, is bitter. Thorns and briars, thistles and nettles, are the crop where wheat was cultivated, or where figs and grapes were expected. Instead of seeing lands laughing with corn, the disappointed gentleman-farmer hangs, in a pensive posture, over the gate of the field, that smiles, as it were in mockery, with the red poppy, the blue bugloss, the yellow charlock, the white bear-bind, the silky mallow, and the feather-topped dandelion.

If he has purchased a little manor, the poacher plagues him with his wires, and the unqualified sportsman harasses him with trespasses. Every, hare, partridge, and pheasant, that he sees dispatched to London, he believes to be stolen from himself. Neither night nor day can be spent in perfect security. His money

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he can lock up in his chest, but partridges have wings, hares are fleet, and poachers subtle and indefatigable. The carp and tench are stolen from his ponds. School-boys and idle neighbours ensnare his trout, and troll for his pike, without his permission. All these things render what amuses and profits others, a mortification to the poor possessor.

If he delights in a garden, there also vexation will spring up among the choicest fruits and flowers. See yonder wall most beautifully covered with peaches, that blush like the cheeks of Hebe or Maria. He has chosen the trees with the nicest judgment, trained them with incessant care, and now they are ripe; and to-morrow the finest shall be culled, for it is Maria's birth-day. To-morrow's sun arises, and, lo! the wall is stripped. Some caitiff, at the midnight hour, plucked them all with unrelenting hand, and by this time they are safely lodged in Covent Garden market.

He delighted in poultry. He fed the chickens and ducklings with his own hand. He chose the most beautiful in plumage, the largest in size, the finest for the table. But the soldiers quartered in the neighbourhood, and that varlet, Reynard, have stolen them all, but a few that were shut up in a coop to be fattened for new year's day. These, however, he preserves; but upon computing the expence, he finds that he might have bought them much fatter and finer of farmer Hodge at half the expence.

He fattens his own hogs, and every bit of pork stands him in double the money he could buy it for at the butcher's. He keeps a dairy, but the cows die with disease, the calves are still-born, the butter rancid for want of care, and the milk sour. Hodge would supply his table with every article, cent per cent cheaper than he can make it at home, without trouble, or the hazard of a bad commodity.

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Fortunately for the crows and the dogs, he keeps a little flock of sheep, with the prettiest musical bells ever heard in the country. But for want of skill and care in the management, half of them die of the rot, or are worried by the mastiff to death. Those which he kills, furnish his table with an inferior mutton as dear as venison.

He brews his own beer, presses his own cider, and bakes his own bread; but three times out of four the beer has an ill taste, through want of skill and cleanliness of the casks; the cider is vapid; and the bread, luckily for the pigs, heavy.

Add to this and a thousand other mortifications of a similar kind, that the comforts of neighbourhood are often destroyed by causes which appear trivial, but are very momentous in a village. The squire rides over his seed in hunting, breaks down his painted Chinese pales, and saws off the first rail of his seven-barred gate, which he had caused to be made, with great taste, by a London carpenter. The clergyman demands tithes of his sheep, pigs, poultry, eggs, and milk; and as he is determined to resist extortion, he goes to law for five shillings, and is cast with costs, that amount to a hundred pounds. No neighbourly intercourse can continue. So far from a comfortable reciprocation of good offices, that scarcely common civility is observed. Not even a bow at church, or the common salutation of a "how do you do?" when the parties meet by the casualties of the day. Rural sociality is often bound by cobweb bands.

Thus uncomfortable, he is ready to exclaim with sighs,

Vitæ me redde priori. HOR.

and looks back with regret on the ease, plenty, liberty, and society of the city which he once detested.

But I do not mean that a conclusion should be

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drawn, that the country and rural employments are not able to furnish much pleasure. My wish is, to convince persons who retire into the country late in life, for ease only, that they must not raise their expectations of rural happiness too high; and that in pursuit of ease, they ought not to engage in farming to any great extent, because it is an employment full of anxiety and care, subject to much disappointment, and as little adapted to procure ease, as the commerce of the busy trader, the employmonts of the statesman, the lawyer, or the physician. He who wishes, on retirement, to enjoy all the tranquillity which the country can afford, should rather be a spectator than a sharer in the employments of agriculture; and be satisfied with inhaling the sweet air, and viewing the delightful scenes of the country, without troubling himself, unless he is skilled in husbandry, to raise and produce those necessary commodities of life, which he may purchase at the market cheaper and better without any anxiety.

EVENING XVII.

ON XENOPHON'S MEMOIRS OF SOCRATES, AND THE INFERIORITY OF TRANSLATIONS TO THE ORIGINALS.

A PERSON who should walk about the streets of a great city like Athens or London, and give his opinion on all subjects to those whom he might happen to meet, would be thought, in the present age, a ridiculous enthusiast, or a pitiable madman. Yet it is certain, that he whom the world has long revered as the wisest of mortals, dispensed his advice in this manner, and was, while alive, the object of envy rather than of contempt, as he has been since his death, of admiration.

Socrates committed not the philosophy which he thus disseminated, to writing; and the world would have been deprived of the inestimable treasure, if his

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grateful scholars, Xenophon and Plato, had not preserved it.

Xenophon's Memorabilia, or Memoirs of him abound with a most admirable morality; yet I hope the admirers of ancient wisdom will pardon me, when I presume to say, that many of the conversations are tediously protracted, and that the great Socrates, in the abundance of his good-humour, trifles egregiously. It is however equitable to suppose that, to insinuate his important advice with success, it was necessary to avoid alarming the minds of his hearers, and that the beginning of his conversations should have an air of alluring levity. This levity was probably in unison with the minds of those careless passengers whom he addressed. It drew their attention. They would have shut their ears against every thing which he had to offer, if he had begun by professing a design to reclaim them from vice and folly, in a formal and severe harangue. They would have hastened from him, and turned his attempts into ridicule. But his jocularity detained them, and his good sense, in the conclusion, pointed out their errors, and taught them the expediency of a reformation. Yet though this may apologise for levity and trifling, in the actual conversations of the living Socrates, it cannot render them entirely agreeable to a judicious reader of modern times, for whom the artifice is not necessary.

I read Xenophon's Memorabilia in Greek, while at school, and I was delighted with them. I read them afterwards in an English translation, and I found them in many places tedious and insipid. The translation was apparently performed with sufficient fidelity; but it did not affect or strike with any peculiar force. I have experienced effects exactly similar to this in the perusal of other books in the most celebrated translations. To what shall I attribute them? Are there

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such charms in the Greek language, as are able to give a value to sentiments which of themselves have no recommendation? Certainly not: But there is a conciseness, and, at the same time, a force and comprehension of expression in the Greek language besides its harmony, which, I think, the English cannot equal. On the mind of a reader, who completely understands the language of a Greek author, the ideas are impressed with more vivacity and perspicuity by the original, than by any translation into modern languages. The ancient Greek authors, it is acknowledged, paid great attention to the art of composition, to the choice and arrangement of words, and to the structure of periods; so as to communicate the idea, or raise the sentiment intended, with peculiar force and precision. Xenophon is known to have been one of the most successful cultivators of the art of composition; and it cannot be supposed, that all who have undertaken to translate his works, though they might understand the matter, could have equalled him in style and expression, for which his country and himself were remarkably celebrated. To represent him adequately they must have possessed a style in English equal to his style in Greek.

The pleasure which a reader feels in the perusal of a Greek author, has been attributed to the pride of conscious superiority, over those who are not able to unlock the treasures of which he keeps a key. This opinion has owed its origin to the poor appearance which some of the most celebrated authors of antiquity have made, when presented to the public in the dress of a modern language. The English reader has read translations of the classics, without being able to discover any excellence adequate to the universal reputation of the authors. The translator, though he comprehended his author, and was faithful as to the mean-

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ing, was perhaps a poor writer, unable to communicate properly, the thoughts which he conceived with a sufficient degree of accuracy. The blame unjustly fell on the original author, and on his admirers. He was supposed to have written poorly, and they to have admired him only from motives of pride and pedantical affectation. Some, whose ignorance prevented them from deciding fairly, rejoiced to see that ancient learning, which they possessed not, despised; and eagerly joined in attributing to arrogance and pedantry, all praise of Greek and Latin, to which they were inveterate enemies ,as well as perfect strangers. Thus Greek and Latin studies fell into disrepute.

But the supposition that the pleasure which men feel in reading authors in the ancient languages, arises solely, or chiefly, from the pride of possessing a skill in those languages, is too unreasonable to be generally admitted. Of the many thousand admirers of the ancients, who, in every part of their conduct and studies, displayed great judgment and love of truth, must we suppose the greater part, either deceived in the estimate of the authors whom they read, or actuated by pride, and mistaking the self-complacency of conscious learning and ability, for the pleasure naturally arising from the study of a fine author? Why is not a man, who understands Welsh, German, Dutch, or any other language not remarkable for literary productions, as much inclined to extol the writers in those languages, as the reader of Greek and Latin, if the motive for praise consists only in possessing a knowledge of a language, unknown to the majority of his countrymen or companions?

In accounting for the great esteem in which the Greek and Latin authors are held, much must be attributed to the languages solely, exclusively of thought, doctrine, or method. Many mere English readers who

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are but poorly qualified to give an opinion on the subject, will impute it to pedantry, when I say, that those languages possess inherent beauties, and an aptitude for elegant and expressive composition, to which the best among modern languages can make no just pretension. Till, therefore, an ancient Greek author can be translated into a language equal to his own, it will be unjust and unreasonable to form a final judgment of him from the best translation. It is better to read a good author in a translation, than not to read him at all. I only contend against the injustic of condemning original authors in consequence of the unavoidable imperfections of all translations into the modern languages of Europe.

But to return to Xenophon's Memorabilia, with the consideration of which I began this paper. It has been usual, among the admirers of Socratic morality, to compare it with the evangelical. I am ready to acknowledge the great excellence of it; but I see clearly, that it is no more to be compared to the gospel, than the river Nile to the Pacific Ocean. It seems not to flow from the heart, and it cannot reach its recesses. It knows little of universal charity. It taught not the golden rule of doing to others as we wish they should do unto us.

I cannot, however, avoid recommending the Socraticæ Chartæ, or the fine Ethics of Socrates, as preserved by Xenophon and Plato, to every student who is designed for the sacred profession. He will there find a store of fine observations, maxims, and precepts, which he may recommend with authority and success to his people, under the sanction, and with the improvements, of Christianity.

Dr. Edwards's attempt to discover a system in the Memorabilia of Socrates, notwithstanding its ingenuity, seems to be unsuccessful. It resembles the ingenious

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efforts of many critics to reduce Horace's Epistle ad Pisones on the art of poetry, to the methodical regularity of a technical recipe for making poems. Some critics, like the old gardeners, have no idea of beauty, unless every thing is laid out by the line and rule, the level and the square. But mathematical precision is not required in moral disquisition.

EVENING XVIII

ON A SPECIES OF INJUSTICE IN PRIVATE LIFE. IN A LETTER.

SIR,

THERE is a species of injustice and cruelty in parents to their children, which has not, I think, been stigmatized with the infamy which it jusly deserved. It is not uncommon in fathers, to permit the visits of a lover to his daughter, till the affections of both are engaged, and a clandestine marriage takes place; and then to profess a great dislike to the match, and a very warm displeasure, merely to avoid the payment of a portion. If the father is asked, why he encouraged the lover at first; he answers, that he did not imagine that he visited as a lover, though it was evident enough to every one else, and could not, from the attention paid, be unobserved by the father. The truth is, that he saw with pleasure the mutual passion, and gave every opportunity for its increase, by furnishing opportunities of intercourse, by studied occassions of absence; and even knew of the intended marriage, and took care to be from home at the time he expected it to be celebrated, lest by some accident he should be obliged to make the full discovery, which would frustrate his purpose. This disingenuous and crafty conduct is often productive of great misery.

Mr. Marston was a young surgeon of good connections, good abilities, good person, and with a competent

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income, from a place under government. Having a prospect of settling very advantageously in a genteel neighbourhood, he thought it proper to seek a matrimonial alliance. He visited in the family of a physician of no great practice, who had several very accomplished and beautiful daughters, the eldest of whom, Emily, soon attracted his particular attention. He made no secret of his attachment, but openly avowed it, and behaved with all the frankness of an honourable lover. He could not but consider the father's silence as a tacit consent: but, after the expiration of two years assiduous and successful courtship, he asked the permission of the father to fix a day for the celebration of the nuptials. The father, at the mention of it, started back with affected astonishment, and peremptorily insisted on his discontinuing to visit at his house. No intreaties could avail, and Mr. Marston retired in disconsolate acquiescence. But the links of love were not to be broken. The father went a journey into the north, and the lovers seized the opportunity of cementing an union by marriage, which they did not doubt would soon be sanctioned by the approbation of a parent, who could not but have observed the commencement and increase of their mutual affection.

The father returned. The young couple wanted only his approbation to complete their felicity. They waited upon him together, and in terms of affectionate duty, solicited his pardon and his blessing. He received them with a haughtiness and severity which he had never before displayed; and told them, on their departure, never more to approach his house, for he should give orders to his servants to deny him, whenever they should come to his door.

After the lapse of some time, when they expected his severity might be mitigated by reflection, they applied to him by a letter, expressing their hope, that

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as he had not discouraged Mr. Marston's first visits, but suffered a passion to grow under his eye, he would not be implacably angry with them, for a conduct which was the natural consequence of such indulgence. A respectful hint was added, that as he signified an intention to give his daughter a small fortune on their marriage, it would now be particularly acceptable, as Mr. Marston wanted to take a genteel house and furnish it, without which measure it would be difficult, if not impossible, to enter on the practice of his profession with a prospect of success.

No answer was given to this letter during several months; when, on a second remonstrance, a verbal message was sent by the Father, informing them, that as they had followed their own inclinations without consulting him, they must take the consequences, and live upon love if they could, for that he should not give them a single penny before his decease. It was added, that they need not apply any more; for this resolution was not the effect of a momentary fit of displeasure, but the result of the maturest deliberation.

Mr. Marston, rather than involve himself in debt, retired to lodgings in a little village, hoping that time would effect a reconciliation, and produce that pecuniary assistance, without which he found it impossible to be established. Year after year elapsed, with an increase of family, and a consequent increase of expenses. He endeavoured to obtain a little country practice, but though he was much respected, the profits of a surgeon only, unconnected with the business of an apothecary, added but little to his income, and he was obliged to incur debt, which notwithstanding the utmost frugality, amounted in time to a considerable sum. No assistance came from the father, who loving money above all things, continued to accumulate his store with the most miserly parsimony. But

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as the father was old, Mr. Marston thought he could not long be kept from that portion which he thought himself entitled to, and which was indeed now become necessary to his family's subsistence. Many years had passed in this uncomfortable situation, when grief and anxiety, which had long preyed on Mr. Marston's bosom, put a period to his existence at the age of thirty-six, and left a widow and eight children, with scarcely enough to procure the necessaries of the day. The old gentleman now relented; but it was too late. He, who by his abilities in his profession, might have raised his family to opulence, was gone for ever; and his companion, agitated by every feeling which wears away a tender frame, soon followed him. Eight orphans stood round the grave in which the tenderest of parents were both deposited. Every spectator was affected with sympathy except the father, who, while the clergyman performed the office, was railing at the undertaker in the church-yard, for supplying a handsomer and more expensive coffin than he had ordered.

The children, whom he would not speak to, were sent to the house of a poor mechanic, with orders to clothe them cheaply, and take care of them, till they were respectively of age to be put out apprentices. Destitute of education, and without a true friend to guide them, they turned out unfortunately, ran away from their trades, entered in low situations into the army and navy, married imprudently, or died early of intemperance. Thus a family became wretched and extinct, which, if it had been fostered, as it ought to have been, by the parent who encouraged the first advances of a lover, from the mean idea of getting rid of the expense of a daughter, would have probably lived in a respectable and happy condition.

Wretched avarice! despicable cunning! which can thus dissolve the closest bands of nature, and produce

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misery of the deepest kind, among those whom a parent is bound by all that can bind the human bosom, to render as easy and happy as the condition of humanity will allow.

Let the trick of a father, who encourages or connives at the visits of a lover till mutual affection is rivetted! and, after the consequent marriage affects anger as an excuse for saving his money, be henceforth considered as infamous; and let young men, who have a just value for their own happiness, and the happiness of the women whom they love, be henceforth on their guard, lest they fall into a snare so contemptible and mischievous.

EVENING XIX.

ON THE RASHNESS OF YOUNG AND ADVENTUROUS WRITERS IN MEDICINE.

WHENEVER men of liberal education and long experience have presented their medical remarks to the public, they have justly obtained the praise of ingenuity and benevolence. Fame increased their practice, and practice rewarded them with well-earned opulence. Who can deserve it better, than he, of whom it can justly be said, that he is **opifer per urbem,* in his practice, and *per orbem,* in his communications to the public?

But others, observing that such have owed their celebrity, and consequently their fortunes, to a pamphlet or treatise, on some particular disease, have resolved, at all events, to write and publish a pamphlet or treatise, as soon as they have bought their diploma, or as an introduction to that honour.

In order to attract notice, it became necessary to

* "Opifer per Orbem" is the motto of the Apothecary's Company. It is said of Apollo in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Applied to the medical assistant; it signifies "one ready to afford universal medical assistance."

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distinguish their works, among a multitude of others, by some extraordinary doctrine or position; and I am informed, that things of a most dangerous tendency, and sometimes certainly fatal, have been plausibly recommended by fool-hardy or knavish candidates for medical popularity. *Aude aliquid,* 'strike a bold stroke,' seems to be considered by many as a prescription for procuring practice.

The great object of such persons is to recommend something new, something extraordinary, something that marks a genius, either as a medicament, or as a chirurgical operation. If poison can be administered, in any form, without certain and immediate death, it is soon advanced to the rank of a *panacea,* and the inventor hopes to equal Radcliffe in riches, and Heberden in fame.

Time shews the inefficacy of the boasted invention; but it is to be feared, that many fall victims to it, before the full discovery of its ill effects, or the danger of relying upon it because of its inutility, in extreme or difficult cases.

Whoever takes a retrospective view of medicines which a few years ago were highly extolled, and generally used, will find many of them at present in total disrepute. Yet, if you will believe the writings, which recommended them on their first appearance, their beneficial efficacy was indubitably confirmed by innumerable cases. If they were efficacious once, they are probably still efficacious; for it is not to be believed that, by any causes whatever, the human body can have undergone a total change since their introduction. But they are now perhaps pronounced by the best judges utterly inefficacious or pernicious; and there is reason therefore to conclude that they were always so; and owed their popularity and success to novelty, or to the activity, address, and recommendation, of some artful professor of medicine.

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But though the world might profit by uniform experience of the fallacy of medical pretensions, yet, as there is always a new generation rising, the same arts are again practised, and practised with dangerous success. In nothing are men more easily deluded than in the pretensions of medical practitioners.

It must be acknowledged, that the temerity of making experiments may casually lead to improvements in medical science; but it is a cruel temerity; for experiments in medicine are made on the sick at the hazard of life. A young man who hastily recommends to the public a powerful medicine, without due experience of its effect, which is too common in the present times, may be guilty of homicide, in a thousand melancholy instances, when he intended only to advance his own fame and fortune.

The spirit of research and adventure is indeed laudable in young men; but, when it produces works to the public which endanger health and life, it ought to be under greater restraint, than the sanguine disposition of raw practitioners, inventors, and projectors, is willing to allow. I appeal however to their humanity; and hope they will condescend to submit their treatises, previously to publication, to three or four of the most eminent and oldest physicians (or surgeons, if the subject be chirurgical), and even after that, to express themselves with doubt and diffidence, on the certainty of their discoveries and the infallibility of their remedies. They will act humanely, as well as prudently, by adding a chapter of cautions in the use of whatever they recommend.

Indeed, if medical publications were read only by medical professors and practitioners, there is reason to hope, that the rashness of a writer might be corrected by the caution and skilful experience of the professional reader. But, in these times, every man and woman

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reads a book, in which they think themselves interested; and the sanguine pamphlet of a young physician, who is able to dress his fancies in a language tolerably agreeable and perspicuous, falls into the hands of those, who are totally ignorant of medicine, both practical and theoretic, and who, imagining their own case to be exactly described in the book, take the medicine, just as it is prescribed, without regard to the difference of age, seasons, or symptoms. Constitutions are thus ruined by those who speciously pretend to have discovered their preservative.

It is a sad instance of human depravity, that, from motives of sordid interest or foolish vanity, men will trifle and tamper with the health and lives of their fellow-creatures, especially when their profession is to cherish health and prolong life.

But since there is no reason to suppose that rash physicians will discontinue the practice of publishing their crudities, it is certainly right to advise invalids, and all inexperienced persons who are not in the medical and chirurgical profession, not to read any books whatever on the subject of physic. This advice is indeed proper, even when the books are acknowledged to be solid, and known to be authenticated by the long practice of the writers; for, such is our weakness, especially in the hour of sickness, that we are apt to imagine every bad symptom, and almost every disease of which we read, to be our own: and the power of the imagination in augmenting disease, is not only well known to physicians, but felt by general experience.

After all that can be said in praise of medicine, it is confessed, by the most sensible physicians, to be a very doubtful point, whether, upon the whole it has been more beneficial or injurious. It is an uncertain art. This point however is not uncertain, but very clear

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that in the hands of the young, the inexperienced, and the rash, it is dreadfully destructive of the human race. What must it be then, when every man is his own physician? When he reads a crude pamphlet on a disease under which he supposes himself to labour, and without any preparatory knowledge, administers boldly whatever is recommended in the confidence of ignorance, or with the specious persuasion of a self-interested writer? Abstain therefore from medical books; and apply, in sickness, to the best physician or apothecary within reach of your situation. Professional men themselves do not usually prescribe for themselves or families, in extreme cases; but call in the assistance of those who, with every advantage of speculative and practical skill, have also the additional advantage of being able to act with a cooler and more deliberate judgment than any man can usually exert, when his own health and happiness are deeply interested.

Among the inconveniencies attending the multitude of books in the present times, it is one, that every man is instructed by some interested divulger of mysteries, to be his own operator or counsellor in every department. Every man may be his own lawyer, physician, divine, gardener, broker, and builder. This, it might be supposed, would injure the several professors; but experience seems to prove that it serves them; every man attempting every thing for himself, without experience, and solely by the partial and imperfect directions of books, renders every thing he undertakes worse; and the professor is called in at last, and finds much more employment, than if his assistance had been sought before the bungling efforts of ignorance had rashly interposed.

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EVENING XX.

ON THE BOOKS AND FUGITIVE WRITINGS WHICH ARE PROPER FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF SMALL PORTIONS OF LEISURE.

THERE are fragments of time in the life of every man, in which, from some inconvenience of his circumstances, he is unable either to read with continued attention, or to enjoy the advantages of select company. In those intervals, such books are pleasant as amuse and inform, in very short sections or chapters, and in an easy and perspicuous style, resembling, as much as possible, the variety and familiarity of conversation.

Many of the French books, under the title of ANA, are, I think, particularly useful for the purpose of filling up a vacant interval. They are lively and various. They treat of history, literature, arts; subjects which amuse, without interesting in such a degree, as to fatigue or excite the mind, beyond the pitch of a pleasant and equable tranquillity.

There is a great difference in the numerous *ana*. The best I ever read are not entitled *ana* indeed; but they are exactly the same in their kind; I mean Melanges d'Histoire et de Literature, par Monsieur Vigneul Marville. The name of the real author, it is said, was D'Argonne. The work abounds with pleasing anecdotes, written with grace and vivacity. The part I am displeased with is, the severe hypercriticism on Bruyere. It is ingenious but uncandid, and could proceed only from pique and prejudice. But I am speaking of amusement; and even mistaken criticism, written in the lively manner of D'Argonne, cannot but form an agreeable diversion in the interval of calm leisure.

Gesner recommends *ana* for the *horæ subsecivæ*, and also Choffin's Amusemens Philologiques, Martial's Select Epigrams, Owen's Epigrams, Epictetus, Bouhors's Pensees Ingenieuses, Phædrus, De la Motte, Fontaine,

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Valerius Maximus, Erasmus's Apophthegms, and all other similar and detached pieces. None of these require great attention or exertion, and yet they amuse and instruct in a very agreeable manner.

Selden's "Table Talk," would be called according to the French fashion, *Seldeniana*, and it is very proper for a pocket companion. Maxims and reflections, collections of poetry, letters and fugitive pieces, with which this country abounds, are well adapted to the purpose of occasional amusement.

Indeed, the kind of books is sufficiently obvious; and it is not necessary to enumerate them. They must occur spontaneously to every man acquainted with books; but in the present times, they are all in danger of being entirely superseded by the newspapers.

The newspapers as they are now improved are indeed Melanges of literature, of history, of criticism, of biography, of politics, of philosophy, of religion, and of every thing that busy mortals pursue with ardour and solicitude.

Their original object was the communication of political news; but they have increased in number and in size to such a degree, that, to fill them all with a due variety of news, properly so called, is impossible. That source was soon dry, and other fountains were therefore broken up. There can indeed be no good objection to the deviation from the original purpose of political news; for the intention of that was to amuse by the gratification of curiosity; and if innocent amusement, of a similar kind, can be obtained in the heterogeneous matter which they exhibit, they are still valuable and worthy of encouragement.

But in pursuit of distinction and variety, in the gratification of party resentment, and as the tools of faction, many of them have displayed a foul mass of

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falsehood, malignity, and folly; such personal calumny and detraction, as degrades human nature, and could only have been expected from the agency of infernal spirits supplying the press of a Pandæmonium.

It is therefore become desirable to turn the eye from the public waste in which nettles and weeds, at once poisonous and putrid, vegetate, to cultivated gardens and enclosures. Such are most of the French ANA, the Melanges, and miscellanies of literature, history, and morality, which I recommend, as the proper amusement of a vacant hour.

The undertaking may be thought to resemble the cleansing of an Augean stable, and to require an Herculean strength, else one might endeavour to produce that desirable object, a reformation of venal and corrupt newspapers. The channels which convey polluted waters might be taught to devolve a pleasant and salubrious stream.

The conductors of newspapers, as many of them are most respectable men, would probably rejoice to see such a reformation, as might enable them to pursue their useful occupations, and promote their private interest, without the necessity of being instrumental to the diffusion of poison through the various ranks of society.

Suppose then, that, by mutual agreement, they should oblige themselves to admit nothing which could degrade well-earned dignity, or injure reputation, or interrupt the peace of families, without ascertaining the truth of it, by requiring its authenticity to be confirmed by the names of all parties, who should desire to insert a defamatary letter or paragraph.

This precaution would exclude some truth; but it would, at the same time, exclude more falsehood and misrepresentation; and newspapers would rise in value and repute, as they would be considered as authentic

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and respectable records worthy of being consigned to posterity.

If the papers were not of so large dimensions as they are, there would not be a necessity of supplying a quantity of matter merely to fill the columns; and, consequently, a more scrupulous selection might take place.

The king for the time being, and the judges his representatives, the church, and all its ministers, as well as all religious instructors, of whatever denomination, should always be mentioned in respectful terms. Their titles and honourable additions should be joined to their names, wherever it can be done without affectation, or tedious formality. It should be considered, that newspapers go into the hands of the vulgar, the ignorant, the idle, the profligate, the thievish, and the abandoned, of every degree and species; and that when once these are taught to speak disrespectfully of their superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil, much of that subordination is disturbed, which was settled for the benefit of all; and much of that restraint infringed, which tended to keep them within due limits for the general advantage. Lawless principles naturally produce lawless actions; and there is every reason to believe, that much of the dishonesty of the lower orders, much of the riotous spirit of modern times, has been caused by the corruption of newspapers. I speak my thoughts freely, though I know the editors of newspapers have vengeance in their own hands, and are able to repel their assailants, with a lash of scorpions. But the shield of truth is a sufficient defence, and indeed a wound, in a good cause, makes an honourable scar.

Affairs of gallantry, as they are called, should be mentioned, if mentioned at all, with great delicacy. The mention of them at all, unless in cases of parti-

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cular notoriety, tends only to confirm the impudence of parties concerned, and to increase debauchery by the seduction of example. It was lately usual to fill half a column in certain papers, with paragraphs, to puff the fashionable courtseans of the time, and to serve their interest. It is wonderful that papers, abounding in these subjects, can find admission into regular families, where there are wives and daughters of unsullied reputation.

There are some advertisements so evidently fraudulent, and others so grossly indecent, that he who aspires to the character of a good citizen, will find it difficult to render the publication of them consistent with such a description.

It is not difficult to point out the deformities of some among the public papers; for the features are prominent; but it is unnecessary. All considerate persons must have considered some prints, particularly where important truth is suppressed by influence, and defamation paid for with public money, as pests and nuisances. I quit the subject, assuring the reader, that I have no personal cause of dislike to any of them. I disapprove of those which, to serve a party, sacrifice truth, justice and mercy, because I think them publicly injurious. They have been inimical to all order, propriety, moderation; to virtue, to learning, and to religion: therefore an endeavour to reform them can want no apology. I will add only one hint to the conductors of them which may avail when others are ineffectual. Let them consider, that by degrading newspapers from that dignity which they might possess, as pleasant and useful vehicles of authentic information, and as the most effectual defences against violence and despotism, they may gradually render them too contemptible for general notice. The wickedness of mankind, and the corruption of society, may make such

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an event not very probable at present; yet it is certain that, in process of time, newspapers may become so worthless, so utterly destitute of truth, as to be universally neglected.

If manners do not effect the reformation of newspapers, laws may hereafter intervene to supply the defect: and since it is the part of the legislature, and of all good government, to suppress every general nuisance, it may be apprehended that the press may be unfortunately restrained, and newspapers abolished or discouraged by an enormous impost. Nothing but the revenue arising from them preserves them at present from some limitations, and which would render them beneficial to society, without that commixture of evil which almost overbalances their advantages.

With all their imperfections on their heads, they are upon the whole the best bulwarks of our liberty, and the surest defence of the helpless against the proud man's contumely and the oppressor's wrong. They sound the alarm bell throughout an empire, and no influence is great enough to stifle the sound, before the people examine into its cause. Let us cheerfully bear all their evils, rather than endanger the liberty of the press.

EVENING XXI.

ON IMITATING A MODEL FOR THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

Many of the rules of rhetoricians contribute little to the improvement of the orator, and serve only to display the professor's subtility. But the advice, which they give on the subject of imitation, is truly valuable, as it conduces immediately to faciliate practice. They instruct their scholars, after the preparatory learning is acquired, to chuse a model of style, according to which they may shape their own; and not only the best writers and orators, but also the best painters, sculptors,

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and architects, have found that the easiest and most infallible mode of acquiring, what the Greek call ἕξις an habitual ease in the practice of their arts, is to follow the footsteps of some excellent predecessor.

The art of life may derive advantage from rules intended only to faciliate the acquisition or practice of those humbler hearts, which administer to pleasure, to pride, or to convenience. Let him who wishes to live well, like him who wishes to write well, chuse a model which he may imitate with a judicious and discriminating, and not with a blind and servile, imitation.

A caution is necessary, lest the imitation recommended should become an odious species of affected resemblance, lest it should be so close as to destroy all originality, and lest it should degenerate to an apish mimicry*. Such an imitation must be contemptible. Seneca gives a good idea of the sort of resemblance to be sought, when he says "the imitator of a style should endeavour to be like the original, not with the same exactness as a picture is like the person represented, but as a child resembles the features of its parent." *Similem esse te volo, quomodo filium, non quomodo imaginem.*

I would have you like, as a son; not as a statue.

The first care is to select a proper person for a pattern, and then to discriminate between the qualities in his charactar which are suited to our genius, situation rank in life, and profession, and those which, however admirable in him, would be ill-placed and ridiculous in us. Without this attention, we shall fall into the error of those whom an illustrious pattern leads into an imitation of its faults together with its beauties; we shall be affected, and lose our native character, without gaining in its place, an adscititious one of equal value.

A judicious man will naturally select some person

*Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis! ENNIUS.

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for imitation in the same profession or employment, of similar views, and of eminence in the particular walk of life, into which himself has entered. Common sense directs to such a choice. A clergyman, for instance, will intimate a clergyman; a lawyer, a lawyer; a physician, a physician; and so in all other departments of life.

The character, which forms the model, may be either living or dead. There are many lives of men in all professions written with accuracy, and with a minute detail of particular circumstances. Such models as these may be often better known, and more easily imitated, than living characters, especially by young men, who cannot be much acquainted with the world, at least with eminent persons, in a degree sufficient to know all the requisite circumstances concerning them.

I will descend to particulars. Suppose the young man in orders, and that he fixes upon some eminent character, by which to regulate his private life and his parochial conduct. Suppose that person to be Bishop Wilson or Dr. Hammond, or Dr Isaac Watts, or any others of those many exemplary Christians "whose bodies are buried in peace, but whose names live for evermore*."

In every situation of life which appears parallel to theirs, he will ask himself how they could have acted, and he will find an answer by observing how they really did act. Two or three such models will furnish precedents which, with a little adaptation to modern times, will afford a directory for conduct, under all emergencies. Great judgment is certainly necessary even here; and I have already said, that a blind imitation of any model whatever is not to be approved.

Some have recommended not only the imitation of a a person of excellent character, but the habit of supposing him always present, seeing and hearing us on

*Ecclesiasticus.

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all occasions. We may thus make him our privy-counsellor, ask ourselves what he would say on such a point, what advice he would give, and whether we should be ashamed to act as our inclination prompts us in his real presence. Thus he may become the guide of our lives and the regulator of our behaviour.

What I have said of a clergyman's chusing a model may be applied to all other professions, and indeed to all occupations, from the king to the mechanic. A good model once chosen will lead them in the journey of life as a hand-post directs the traveller over a wide waste or forest, or as the lamp from the beacon guides the mariner on the ocean. They must still use their own discernment, and exert their own efforts, or they may lose their way, even in full view of Eddystone lighthouse.

Civil or general history has always been extolled as the great teacher of wisdom. But its lessons are chiefly political, and kings and statesmen are principally concerned in them. Biography is the species of history best adapted to teach wisdom in private life. There are many lives of English worthies, which cannot be attentively read by an ingenuous young man, without exciting an ardour of virtue.

But living models may be also very advantageously selected by the aspirant after excellence. The danger is, lest the choice should fall on a wrong character. Splendour of rank, riches, honours, station, are too apt to recommend patterns which exhibit only a a vicious exemplar, whitened and gilded by the hand of fashion. Envy and prejudice are also prone to add deformity to charcters really beautiful. So that the choice of living-examples is more difficult than that of the departed, whose fame is fixed by death.

But, so long as a good model is chosen, there is little doubt but that the means of arriving at excellence will

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be facilitated, whether the choice fall on the living, or on those who are out of the reach of envy.

The precept of Quintilian in the art of rhetoric must be observed in life. At first, and for a long time, only the best writers, and such as will not mislead him who implicitly confides in them, must be selected for imitation*.

But let not the imitation even of the best authors or the best men become a plagiarism either in writing or in life. There is a noble originality, the characteristic of genius and the parent of all excellence.

EVENING XXII.

ON DR. JOHNSON'S PRAYERS, WITH A REMARK ON HIS STYLE.

MANY of those writer, who have lately arrived at any very distinguished degree of fame, have favoured the cause of infidelity. It is therefore the more pleasing to the friend of revelation and of mankind, to observe one of the most popular authors of our own country, and one of the ablest men that ever existed, zealously religious. Every one had heard that Dr. Johnson was devout; but I believe, few entertained an adequate idea of his warmth and scrupulous regularity in the offices of devotion, till the publication of his Prayers and Meditations.

They exhibit the writer in a light in which he has seldom appeared to his readers. He usually puts on a garb of dignity and command. His Rambler is written in the style of authority. His prefaces to the Poets are dictatorial. The reader is easily induced to believe that pride is a striking feature in his character. But he no sooner opens the book of Prayers and Meditations, than he sees him in a state of true humility. No affectation in the style. No words of unusual occurrence. Every expression is such as is well adapted

* Diu non nisi optimus quisque, et qui credentem, sibi minimè fallat, legendus est.

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to a frail mortal, however improved by art or favoured by nature, when he approaches the mercy-seat of the Almighty.

The reader is thus in some degree gratified, by observing a man, who had always appeared to him as a superior mortal, and exempt from human infirmities, feeling and acknowledging, with all humility, the common weaknesses of all human creatures.

It would be the partiality of prejudice to affirm, that the volume which I am now considering is free from all marks of superstition. To be uneasy because one has, through mistake, drunk a spoonful of milk in a cup of tea on a fast day, argues a mind not entirely under the regulation of right reason. To pray forthe dead is, I think, at least venial; but I am apprehensive that it will subject the devotee to the charge of superstition among the strict and severe in doctrinal religion.

Upon the whole, though there are many apparent weaknesses in the volume, which render it a cause of wonder, debate, and offence among many, yet it does honour to the writer of it, as a proof of remarkable piety. And with respect to weaknesses, alas! what is man but a complication of them? And indeed, who shall presume to determine decisively that the eccentricities of this book are weaknesses? Many of those who censure them as such, are probably far less capable of judging than Johnson, to whom they certainly did not appear in that light.

If he was sincere, and there is every reason to believe it, the most scrupulous particulars in the performance of his religious duties deserve a name far more honourable than that of acts of superstition. Man is a most wretched being unassisted by the protection of divine favour; how can it then be wondered that he is ready to attend to the minutest circumstance which, in the hour of distress, appears likely to secure it?

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Before we condemn Johnson, let us examine our own conduct, and consider whether the confidence in which many of us live, and our neglect of religion, is not a weakness more deplorable than any thing in what is called the superstition of this pious man.

While I am speaking of Johnson, I cannot refrain from adding an observation on his style. It always appeared to me, and I believe is now generally thought, that he had selected Sir Thomas Brown as his model of style in the composition of the Rambler.

I select a few phrases from the Vulgar Errors of Brown in confirmation of my opinion.

"Intellectual acquisition is but reminiscential evocation."

"We hope it will not be unconsidered that we find no constant manuduction in this labyrinth."

"For not attaining the deuteroscopy, they are fain to omit the superconsequences, coherences, figures, or tropologies, and are not some time persuaded by fire beyond their literalities."

"Their individual imperfections being great, they are moreover enlarged by their aggregation."

"A faraginious concurrence of all conditions."

"Being divided from truth themselves, they are yet further removed by advenient deception."

"Deluding their apprehension with ariolation."

These passages I have selected, not because they are the most striking, but because they first occurred. A thousand instances of similarity might be produced, if the whole volume were searched, and if the limits of my paper would admit them.

Though Brown is an excellent writer, yet it must be allowed that he is pedantic; and that he preferred polysyllabic expressions derived from the language of ancient Rome, to his vernacular vocabulary, even in instances, where it was equally elegant and significant.

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Had he sought the fountains of antiquity only when those of his own times were dry, he would have deserved esteem for enriching the English language, and he might have been justly held up as an example for imitation? but he appears to use singular and magnificent words from ostentatious motives; and what, after all, does the use of them prove? That he was acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages, and that he was a learned etymologist. Sensible readers are not persuaded of another's general learning, or solid wisdom, by the pomp of exotic language.

But notwithstanding this censure, Brown must be acknowledged to have contributed much to the *copia verborum*, by introducing words which in his age were uncouth, but which are now become elegant and familiar. Johnson, considered as a lexicographer and improver of the English language, did right to select an author for imitation, who presented him with a model for coining new words. Perhaps he was led to study Brown, among others, in order to qualify himself for the compilation of his lexicon, and in studying him, for this purpose, caught his style, but, after all, it is certain that his moral writing would have been more extended, and consequently done more service, had he chosen a style more simple, and less obscured to vulgar readers, by polysyllabic words of Latin and Greek etymology.

EVENING XXIII.

ON LONG PRAYERS, AND ON THE DEVOTIONS OF BISHOP ANDREWS.

"GIVE me," said an ancient, "whatever may be good for me, though I should neglect to pray for it; and deny me whatever may be hurtful, though I should ignorantly make it the object of my supplications."

This may be called a laconic prayer. It has always

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been much admired. The perfect resignation to the Divine Will which it implies, renders it a model for the imitation of Christian piety.

Our Saviour himself seems to have disapproved of long prayers; and the invaluable prayer which he has condescended to dictate to erring mortals, is remarkable for its beautiful brevity. It might have been reasonably supposed, that the pious composers of prayers would have been desirous of imitating their great Master, in the conciseness of their petitionary compositions. But diffusion and repetition have been one of their most conspicuous blemishes. There is no doubt but that the practice which prevails among some respectable sects, of filling up a long portion of time in their public service, with extemporary prayer, has contributed greatly to increase the length of prayers, beyond the limits both of reason, and of sincere and attentive devotion.

The human mind is so formed as not to be able to retain any sentiment during a long time, in a great degree of fervour. But prayer without fervour is, I fear, an unacceptable service. And this is the reason why brevity in prayer is expressly approved by Him, to whom prayer is to be offered, and who consequently must know what is most agreeable to himself, and what sort of service is most expressive of man's sincerity.

The greatest part of the English liturgy is very justly admired, as furnishing a fine example of supplicatory composition. The collects are remarkably excellent both for conciseness and fervour of expression. But it may be doubted, whether the whole of the service, comprehending three parts, intended at first to be separately used, is not longer than can be attended to devoutly even by the best disposed. The composition of most of the prayers is so well adapted

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to human wants and infirmities, that it might perhaps supersede the necessity of any other prayers, were it not found that the frequency of their use diminishes considerably the warmth and seriousness which otherwise they are calculated to inspire.

Books of prayers composed for private devotion are therefore very useful; and they are certainly not to be examined with great severity of criticism. But there is a little volume, entitled, "Devotions of Bishop Andrews," translated from the Greek by Dean Stanhope, which lately attracted my particular attention, as my expectations were raised to an uncommon height by the following passage in the Preface:

"The heart, already enlightened and inflamed with piety and charity, will here find something exactly suitable to its inward motions, and the most significant and beautiful words wherein to utter its holy desires, and those gracious sentiments, which, without this help, would perhaps break forth with less accuracy both of method and expression. . . . . But the less perfect Christian, who has not yet made so much progress in the school of piety as the former, may reap still greater benefit from this work. It will tend to improve him in knowledge and improve him in practice. . . . . Indeed what less can be expected, when a book of this nature is composed of materials taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and very ancient liturgies, which bear the names of St. James, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom, collected and put together by the most judicious workmen in this way; such as were the persons mentioned in the title-page, Dr. Andrews, once Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Stanhope, late Dean of Canterbury."

After reading these and other passages in the Preface, which are equally strong in the praises of this little manual, it will not be thought extraordinary,

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that I took up the book with great avidity. I admired the pious strain of some of it; but I could not help thinking that the valuable parts of it are disgraced by some passages almost ridiculous. I transcribe the following from the close of an act of faith for Friday.

"O, dearest Saviour, impart to me thy whole self: and let every part and act of thine have its saving influence over me.

"Sanctify me by thy Spirit; feed and strengthen me by thy body; ransom me by thy blood; wash me in thy water; heal me by thy stripes; refresh me with thy sweat; hide me in thy wounds."

I take the liberty of asking any candid reader, whether such petitions are the natural effusions of sincere devotion; whether they are not rather of a trifling and whimsical turn; and whether they do not open a door for the scorner? Let us pray with the spirit, but let us pray with the understanding also.

I know it will be said, that while a form of prayer gives no offence to the simple and well-meaning devotee, for whom it was chiefly designed, it is a matter of little moment whether it please or displease the fastidious critic and the captious wit. But to this I must reply, that it is certainly of importance, not to furnish in any religious composition, real occasion either for censure or derision; and, I might add, that it appears to be an affront to the Majesty of heaven, to offer up a petition to God in a style and manner, in which we should be ashamed to address an earthly potentate. A trifling, a quibbling, a nonsensical prayer can never be the production of a mind warmed with a devotion at once rational and sincere.

I presume not to censure the editor, whom I consider as one of the best ornaments of our church. The blemishes of this little book came not from him, I venture to affirm, but from Dean Stanhope, from Bishop

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Andrews, or from some older writer. I have no copy of the original, and cannot therefore discover whether the above prayer is faithfully translated from it. But I think it cannot proceed from Dr. Horne, whose judgment and beautiful style in the expression of devotional feelings, I have often admired.

The language of a prayer should be natural and warm from the heart, yet at the same time restrained and chastised by good sense, otherwise it must degenerate to the nonsense of the dotard, or the madness of the enthusiast. Dr. Johnson deserves great praise for the simplicity and energy of many of his prayers. Nothing of his pompous style, his long words, or formal periods, is to be observed in them. His good understanding suggested to him the impropriety of all affectation, when he laid aside all pretensions to wisdom, and with an humility, which must always become the greatest of mortals, approached the throne of the Almighty.

After all that taste and criticism can suggest, it is certain that uprightness of intention and fervent piety, are the best beauties of supplicatory writings. He to whom prayer is addressed, considers not the form of words, and the structure of periods; but the faith, the sincerity, the charity of the poor petitioner. If the heart be right, the errors of the understanding and of the lips will pass unnoticed. Yet it is decent and reasonable to take care, according to the best of our knowledge, not to offer up prayers in which there is any known defect unworthy a creature furnished by the Creator with those intellectual powers, which surely can never be more honourably exerted than in the service of Him who gave them.

"I use not to run rashly into prayer," says Howell, "without a trembling precedent meditation; and if any odd thoughts intervene and grow upon me, I

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check myself and recommence; and this is incident to long prayers, which are more subject to man's weakness and the devil's malice."

EVENING XXIV.

ON READING TRIFLING UNINSTRUCTIVE BOOKS, CALLED SUMMER READING.

Belli libelli, lepidi, novi libelli. IGNORAMUS.

SIR,

As I came to this water-drinking place to relax myself from the fatigues of a profession which requires great application and confinement, I am resolved to make use of all the methods which an ingenious and polite place has invented for the valuable purpose of killing time. Accustomed to reading as I have always been, I cannot omit books, while I seek the means of amusement; but I am forbidden by my physician to read any thing but what is called summer reading, and therefore I am a frequent lounger at the circulating library. By the way, I beg leave to give you a hint, that if you do not contrive to make your Winter Evenings, summer reading, they will not be much noticed in the repository of knowledge, where I am now writing you this letter.

As I often sit and read in the library, I have an opportunity of hearing what books are in the most request; and I am frequently not a little diverted with observing the great eagerness with which tomes, totally unknown to me, who have made books the study of my life, are demanded of the librarian. The first question on entering the shop I found to be universally—Have you any thing new? I should have supposed that the publications of the last year would have deserved this epithet; but I found by observation that scarcely any thing is esteemed new, but what is just advertised, and almost wet from the press. Curiosity

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seems to be the great stimulus of the subscribers; idle curiosity, as I may call it, since it seems to seek its own gratification independently of all desire of increasing the store of knowledge, improving the taste, or confirming the principles.

I have smiled at hearing a lady admire the delicacy of sentiment which the author of some novel, which she had just been reading, must possess: though I knew it to be the production of some poor hireling, destitute of learning and taste, knowledge of life and manners, and furnished with the few ideas he had by reading the novels of a few preceding years. He had inserted in the title-page, By a Lady; and various conjectures were often hazarded, in my hearing, concerning the authoress. Some hinted that they were acquainted with her, and that it was a lady of quality. Others knew it to be written by an acquaintance of their own; while all agreed in asserting, it must be by a lady, the sentiments were so characteristically delicate and refined. You may conjecture how much I was disposed to laugh when I was informed that it was the production of a hackney scribbler in Black Boy Alley.

I confess I had been much more conversant in a college library than in a circulating one, and could not therefore but be astonished at the number of volumes which the students would devour. The Helluo Librorum, or Glutton of Books, was a character well known at the university, and mentioned by the ancients; but I believe their idea of him is far exceeded by many a fair subscriber at the circulating library. I have known a lady read twenty volumes in a week during two or three months successively. To be sure they were not bulky tomes, such as those of which it was predicted that a great book was a great evil. The print in the pages of most of them, to speak in the mechanical

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style of mensuration, were three inches by one and a half, and the blank paper exceeded the printed in quantity by at least one moiety on a moderate computation.

Now, Sir, I am not one of those who mean austerely to censure this mode of reading; for I am of opinion that it is often very innocent, and sometimes not without considerable advantage. There are certainly many novels which, though little known in the literary world, are not without merit, and of a very virtuous tendency. Most of them tend to recommend benevolence and liberality; for it is the fashion of the age to affect those qualities; and I really think, as conversation is usually conducted, scarcely so many opportunities occur of imbibing benevolent and virtuous sentiments from it, as from the decent books of a circulating library: I say decent, for I am sorry to observe, that in the multitude of new books which the librarians are obliged to purchase, some have a tendency to diffuse every kind of evil which can mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart.

The danger of indiscriminately reading whatever has the recommendation of novelty, induced me to take up my pen and write to you, hoping that I might suggest a caution on the subject to some of your fair readers, who, I am sure, have recourse to a circulating library solely to improve and amuse themselves while under the hair-dresser's operation.

They would, I think, do right to inquire into the character of every book they read, before they take it into their dressing-room, and to shew the same caution in the choice of their circulating-library books, as they would in the selection of their company.

Your's, &c.

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EVENING XXV.

ON BEING DISGUSTED WITH BASHFULNESS IN BOYS.

To prevent the evil which arises from attempting things beyond their strength, nature seems to have given many animals that instinctive knowledge of their want of ability which produces caution. The bird, while it is callow, never leaves the nest, unless by an accidental fall; and when its plumage is grown to a considerable degree of perfection, it takes but short flights at a time, and seems unwilling to lose sight of its parent and nurse. It is not till the wings have acquired strength and agility, that it leaves the branches or the ground, and dares to soar undauntedly in the fields of air, unmindful of the nest and the fostering feathers, which lately supplied it with warmth and protection.

Something of a similar diffidence arising from conscious immaturity of power, appears to me to take place in the human mind at the puerile age; and I cannot help thinking it truly amiable; yet it is stigmatized with the odious name of shyness and sheepishness, and many parents appear more solicitous to divest their children of it, than to furnish them with any grace, virtue, or accomplishment. By dint of great pains, they often succeed, in thus forcing the rose-bud to expand its immature leaves; but I fear they are greatly mistaken in their management, and that their uneasiness at seeing their children diffident is totally misplaced.

If indeed the diffidence, which they lament, were likely to continue through life, I agree with them, that it would be a great misfortune. It would prevent exertion, in a thousand instances, where exertion would be rewarded with profit and honour; and it would occasion the child much causeless anxiety. But in

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general, there is no danger of its continuance beyond the period of immaturity, at which it is certainly natural, and rather pleasing and graceful, in the eyes of sensible observers. I contend that it is caused by conscious inability arising from youth, and that it will of itself give place to a proper confidence, as soon as it feels a consciousness of power matured and confirmed by age.

I believe I may go farther, and assert, that this unfashionable diffidence, which many fathers and mothers labour to remove, even in the tender period of early infancy, is favourable to growth in mental vigour and virtuous principles. All who are to excel in future must devote a previous time to discipline. He who would one day speak must first listen. And, to return to the bird to which I have already alluded, it is well known to the students in ornithology, or at least to those admirers of the feathered race, called bird-fanciers, that the finest singing-birds listen when young to the old ones, and even when they have learned their notes, venture only to record, as those gentlemen express it, that is, to sing in a soft low tone, almost as if they were ashamed of being heard. I have often heard the blackbird, who has afterwards made the woods resound with his melody, trying his skill or recording, under the covert of a hawthorn, in so low a warbling, as scarcely to be distinguished amid the concert of the grove.

The mind collects images of things, and forms opinions during the immature state, at which it scarcely ventures to employ the tongue in utterance. And when a store of ideas is at last accumulated, it feels a spontaneous confidence founded on conscious merit; and shines at a mature age, with a lustre which it would never have displayed, if, instead of collecting ideas, it had been indulging its own pride in uttering vivacious nonsense.

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I am of opinion that men of the greatest genius, of fine imagination and sensibility, were of necessity timid and diffident in the puerile period; and I wish parents not to infer, from the diffidence and silence of their children, that they are naturally stupid. There is indeed an appearance of diffidence which arises from real dulness; but there is a real diffidence caused by excess of sensibility, and it is a favourable presage of all that is lovely and excellent in human nature. Parents will therefore endeavour to discriminate duly, before they decide on the abilities of their children, from the appearance of timidity or shyness in company, and their diffidence in saying or doing any thing which their age has not afforded them opportunities to learn. They will be cautious of removing this veil which nature furnishes for defect, as she guards the blossom before it has acquired strength sufficient to admit of full expansion. If the bud, which would naturally expand in April or May, were rudely opened in March, what fruit could justly be expected in August and September?

Nothing is more common than to observe parents introducing a boy of eight or nine years old into company, to balls, and to assemblies, with the professed intention of wearing off that sheepishness (for such is the ignominious term) which he may have unfortunately contracted at school or in the nursery. Neither is he suffered to be silent, lest his friends should attribute silence to dulness. Contrary to his inclination, the poor boy must force himself to be pert and loquacious to all whom he encounters, or he will be ridiculed and reproached for stupidity. Unfortunate mistake! If he should become a proficient at this early age, in the school of audacity, to what a height of impudence will he arrive in manhood? of impudence unsupported by knowledge, or any real merit which can justify even confidence. Too many in this age, are trained in this

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mistaken plan, which is the reason why we commonly meet with forward young men, who overpower all around them with noise, who are incapable of rational conversation, who are avoided by all sensible persons, and who associate with the only characters, who can enjoy their company, gamesters, horse-jockies, phaeton-drivers, drunkards, and debauchees. Their mistaken parents succeeded too well in divesting them at an early age, of that diffidence which was natural, which was becoming, and which would have been the means of preserving their innocence, their characters, their health, their fortune, every thing by which life is honorably embellished, and death rendered less formidable.

EVENING XXVI.

ON THE EFFECT OF ANCIENT AND MODERN MUSIC.

If a general ardour of a whole people in the pursuit of excellence be likely to obtain it in its highest degree, it might reasonably be expected that the English nation should at this time be singularly distinguished for a skill in music. The musical mania, if it may be so called, has diffused itself from the court to the cottage, from the orchestra of royal theatres, to the rustics in the gallery of a country church. As Juvenal said of the Greeks of his time who migrated to Rome for interest, that it was a nation of comedians, we may say of the English, that they are a nation of musicians.

But has this general ardour produced that stupendous, unexampled, excellence which might have been expected? I allow the effect only to be an adequate criterion of that excellence. And what is the usual effect of a concert! It is in general an admiration of the performers, of the skill in execution, the volubility of fingers, the quickness of the eye, and the delicacy of the ear. But how are the passions affected? Look

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round the room and see the index of the passions, the eyes and the countenances of the audience. Smiles and complacent looks abound; but these are no indications of those sudden transitions of violent emotion, which music is said to have charms sufficiently to excite. A few may sometimes appear affected; but there is reason to suspect that it is too often an affectation, not the most laudable or amiable.

Among the ancients, the effects of music are said to have been almost miraculous. The celebrated ode of Dryden has made every one acquainted with the magic power of Timotheus over the emotions of the human heart. And all, who have read any thing of ancient history, must have remarked the wonderful effects attributed to the musical instrument in the hand of a master.

Among a hundred other stories, which evince the power of music, I recollect the following: Pythagoras was once likely to be troubled at his lecture, by a company of young men, inflamed with wine, and petulant with the natural insolence of youthful levity. The philosopher wished to repress their turbulence; but forbore to address them in the language of philosophy, which they would either not have attended to, or have treated with derision. He said nothing; but ordered the musician to play a grave majestic tune, of the Doric stile. The effect was powerful and instantaneous. The young men were brought to their sober senses, were ashamed of their wanton behaviour, and with one accord tore off the chaplets of flowers, with which they had decorated their temples, in the hour of convivial gaity. They listened to the philosopher. Their hearts were opened to instruction by music, and the powerful impression being well timed, produced in them a permanent reformation.

How desirable is it to revive the music of Pythago-

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ras! How concise a method of philosophizing to the purpose! What sermon or moral lecture would have produced a similar effect so suddenly?

But nothing of this kind was ever produced by the most successful efforts of modern music. Let us suppose a case somewhat similar to the preceding. Let us imagine a number of intoxicated rakes entering the theatre with a professed intention to cause a riot. Such a case has often been real. The music in the orchestra has done all that it could do to sooth the growing rage; but it was as impotent and contemptible as a pistol against a battery. It would be a fine thing for the proprietors, if a tune or two could save the benches, and the fiddlers preclude the carpenters. But Timotheus and the Doric strains are no more; yet surely in so general a study of music it might be expected that something of their perfection might be revived.

"That the music of the ancients," says Jeremy Collier, "could command farther than the modern, is past dispute. Whether they were masters of a greater compass of notes, or knew the secret of varying them the more artificially; whether they adjusted the intervals of silence more exactly, had their hands or their voices further improved, or their instruments better contrived; whether they had a deeper insight into the philosophy of nature, or understood the laws of the union of the soul and body more thoroughly; and thence were enabled to touch the passions, strengthen the sense, or prepare the medium with greater advantage; whether they excelled us in all, or in how many of these ways, is not so clear; however, this is certain, that our improvements in this kind are little better than ale-house crowds (fiddles) with respect to theirs."

I must leave it to the Burneys and the Bateses of the age to determine to what cause the little effect of music on the passions is to be ascribed. In reviving

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and performing the works of Handel, they have done much towards vindicating the declining honours of impassioned music. But still the commanding effect recorded by antiquity seems to remain a great desideratum.

I profess to consider the subject not as a musician, but as a moralist; in which character, I cannot help wishing to find that sort of music cultivated, which possesses an empire over the heart, and which, like oil poured on the troubled waves of the sea, can sooth the tumultuous passions to tranquillity. I wish to see the musician, who not only pleases my ear by his sounds, and delights my eye by his legerdemain, but who, in the words of Horace, *irritat, mulcet,* enrages or stills my emotions at his discretion. I wish to hear musical Shakespeares and Miltons touch the lyre, or inspire the tube.

I should have ventured to conclude, from the universal application to music, from the perfection of the instruments, and the ingenuity of the compositions, that the art is at this time arrived at its ultimate excellence. It is not easy to conceive, that much more can be done; and I am very doubtful whether the ancients had equal excellence in theory or in execution. Yet, after all, when I consider the effect, I am compelled, however reluctantly, to deplore the great inferiority of the modern to ancient music. As I am no artist on the pipe or on the lyre, I can only suspect that the defect arises from the want of simplicity. It may not after all, be unjust to surmise that the accounts handed down of the stupendous effects of music among the Greeks are exaggerated by *Grecia mendax,* or that disposition of ancient Greece to fiction, which gave rise to the nonsense of mythology.

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EVENING XXVII.

ON THE EFFECT OF CARICATURAS EXHIBITED AT THE WINDOWS OF PRINTSELLERS.

Animum pictura pascis. VIRG

Poison may be converted into medicine; and ridicule, which, when directed against morality and religion, operates like a pestilence, may be used to expose vice and folly with peculiar efficacy.

The mode of ridiculing by prints has some advantages over that by writing and argument. Its effect is instantaneous; and they who cannot read, or have not sense enough to comphrehend, a refined piece of raillery, are able to see a good caricatura, and to receive a powerful impression from it.

The lower classes in London, it may be supposed, have not time, inclination, or ability, to read much, but their minds are filled with ideas, not only by the multitude of occurrences, but also by the prints which are obtruded on their notice, in the windows of shops conspicuously situated in the most frequented streets. And I believe, they often receive impression either favourable, or unfavourable, to their honesty and happiness, as they loiter at a window, with a burden on their backs, and gape, unmindful of their toil, at the comical productions of the ingenious designer. Every benevolent man must wish, that whatever representations have a tendency to corrupt and mislead them, might be kept out of sight; and only such exhibited in the window, as may divert them innocently, or convey some useful instruction. I say nothing on the subject of indecent prints at present, as every one must acknowledge that they infuse a poison, the bad effects of which none can trace to their ultimate malignity.

But it appears to me, that the exhibition of the first magistrate, and of great statesmen, in caricatura, must contribute to diminish or destroy that reverence, which

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is always due to legal authority, and established rank, and which is confessedly conducive to the most valuable ends of human society. The virulence of party hesitates not to represent royalty itself in situations, which must render it contemptible in the eyes of kennel-rakers, shoe-blackers, chimney-sweepers, and beggars.

Their contempt, it will be said, is of little consequence, and yet these personages made their power felt in the memorable month of June 1780; and riot and disorder are greatly promoted by emancipating them from all reverence for their superiors; and how can they respect the subordinate dignities, who are taught to defile the fountain of honour, and to malign the author of all civil dignity? Besides, the effect is by no means confined to their order. The contempt must have been diffused through the higher and middle ranks, before it descended to them; and there is great reason to believe, that some popular commotions which have disgraced the present reign, originated and grew from the contempt thrown on the higher orders by various methods, and among others, by ludicrous representation on the copper-plate.

Our laws have been careful of the reputation of the subject, and libels cannot be printed without the peril of punishment. The framers of the laws did indeed foresee, that the engraver, as well as the writer, might be guilty of defamation, and deserved to be restrained by the terrors, and the penalties of legal control. But our love of liberty is so ardent, that, like other violent passions, it sometimes overshoots its mark, and looses the object at which it aims. Else a practice which infringes on private liberty, more than any act of any king in this country, could not be suffered to prevail so generally without prosecution, and with triumphant impunity. What can savour more of the oppression of wanton tyranny than not to permit a man to be ugly in his person

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without exhibiting him as a spectacle and a laughing-stock, in the streets of the great city? Is a man to be put to shame, to stand, as it were, in the pillory, a mark for scorn to point her finger at, because nature has given him a long nose, a protuberant belly, or an ill-shapen leg?

Indeed, of all satire none is so ungenerous, as that which reflects on personal deformity, one of the principal of the τα ουκ φημι, the things which are not in our power, and for which we are often no more accountable than for bad weather, pestilential blasts, or inundations. But the inventors of caricatures are not contented with representing the deformity, as it really exists, but glory in their ability to add to distortion, and render an irregularity, or defect, which would pass unnoticed, eminently and ridiculously conspicuous. A man of sense and fortitude, it will be said, may despise a contempt, which arises from circumstances, for which he cannot be blamed; but is the very person who urges this, possessed of such sense, and such fortitude, as to despise any kind of ridicule which will adhere to him, as a stigma of reproach? With all our pretensions to wisdom, there are none but those who have lost their sensibility, who can patiently bear to become objects of public derision, either for singularities of the mind, or the body.

The practice of exhibiting all persons of consequence in caricatura, may therefore not only injure the public, by diminishing the respect due to official authority, but cruelly invade the peace of families, and distress the bosom of an unoffending individual. It deserves, then, to be reprobated, by all good and thinking men, who are unwilling to sacrifice, for the sake of a laugh, public welfare and private tranquillity.

Ridicule has been always supposed peculiarly inju-

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rious, as it is confessedly indecent, in the affairs of religion. I believe wisdom will always be justified by her children, and that Christianity is founded on a rock so firmly, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; but yet, I am convinced, that to treat its ministers or ordinances with contempt, may do it great injury among the lower orders and weak minds, who will be thus led to despise what cannot be despised with safety. There are few subjects which the designers of ludicrous prints take more delight in, than to represent clergymen in a laughable situation and figure. I mention one instance of a print, which would hardly deserve notice, if it had not become popular among the vulgar. The print of the Vicar and Moses is often hung up on the walls of the farmhouse, where the clergyman of the parish used to be reverenced as a saint, and consequently was able to do great good; but is it to be supposed that this reverence will not be diminished, among the children at least, who from their infancy are accustomed to behold the parson an object of derision, a glutton, and a drunkard?

Any mode of affording innocent diversion, of exciting mirth without giving pain, is not only allowable, but desirable, in a world abounding with evil, and in a state of existence, which is, of necessity burthened with care. But all human things require limitation.

The genius of a Hogarth is certainly worthy of admiration, as an excellence; and of honour, as having been made a vehicle of great good to society. Hogarth finely moralized with his pencil. His imitators have not reached his excellence in art, they have scarcely aimed at his morality, but they have abused their petty talents in lowering every thing great and venerable.

Some late designers in caricatura have merit: and if they would confine their ridicule to vice and villany,

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they would add to the praise which is due to them, as men of skill and genius, that which is superior, the praise of benevolence, and the virtue of doing good in their generation.

Many may be disposed to consider ludicrous prints as trifles; but apparent trifles are acknowledged by all wise men to lead to serious evils, and they ought to be carefully suppressed, while they continue trifles, and while the suppression is therefore practicable. Every good member of society must acknowledge the value of decency, good order, public tranquillity, and private security; and every sensible and observing man may perceive, that all these may be endangered by the libels of the pencil. No one knows whose turn it may be to suffer next, and it is therefore the interest of all, even of the perpetrators of the mishief themselves, to discourage the prevalence of wanton assassination.

EVENING XXVIII.

ON MODERN HEROISM.

It is said by the learned, that the age of heroism is no more; but I beg leave to dissent from their opinion. An age, I suppose, derives that appellation from its abundance of heroes. If so, then the present age may be styled heroic. I cannot say that we have many Alexanders, Cæsars, and Charles's; but, if what the world call spirit, fire, and genius, constitute a hero, we certainly abound in heroes.

The name, indeed, hero, is not usually adopted, because it is become a little unfashionable. But the character exists at present under the title of a "dashing fellow."

The etymology of the word dashing, is doubtful; but among other explanations of its meaning, our lexicographer says it signifies, "to fly off in flashes

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with a loud noise." In this sense, it is very applicable to the character of the true dashing fellow.

The object of this kind of hero, is fame, or rather distinction. He scorns inglorious ease, though accompanied with health, plenty, and the esteem of his acquaintance. Health, plenty and esteem, what are ye to public renown? Think of the bliss of being admired at a horse-race, pointed at in a theatre, and daily celebrated in the paragraphs of a dashing newspaper.

The dashing fellow, as great genius usually shews strong indications of it at the earliest age, begins his career of glory at the public school, to which he is sent by his parents, to rub off the shyness incident to natural modesty and the immaturity of youth. At school, he scorns to pore over musty Greek and Latin, but gloriously aims at being preeminent in every mischievous frolic, scorning the control of his master, and taking the lead in every attempt to revolt agaiust authority, and in support of liberty, "that goddess heavenly bright." He spends his money, with which he is plentifully furnished by his parents on purpose to distinguish him, not in boyish gratifications, but in hiring horses, keeping pointers and terriers, giving dinners, and in every noble enterprise of vice and wantonness, of which his age is capable.

On leaving school, whence he has deserved the honour of expulsion a hundred times, though the grovelling spirit of the master would not confer it, he aspires to the splendid distinctions of the turf, the gaming-table, and the whip; not to mention his illustrious emulation of the Grand Seignior in the establishment of his seraglio.

If he is born to a large estate, he disdains to wait, like meaner spirits, for the death of those on whom it depends, or till he comes to age, but munificently bestows premiums on the despised Israelites, to supply his present unconfined generosity. And though he

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should borrow and spend more than he will be ever able to repay, he is above stooping to the narrow thoughts of pecuniary concerns. With an heroic confidence, he trusts for future supplies to time, to fortune, to the friendly dice, to any thing, and to nothing.

Thus furnished with money, the sinews of heroism as well as war, he sallies forth in quest of adventures, in a high car, ycleped a phaeton, drawn by four steeds, not bigger than ponies, but beautiful enough to attract all eyes, at every inn, and through every town he passes, in his rapid progress from horse-race to horse-race. The importance of his objects renders an unparalleled expedition sometimes so necessary, that he condescends to hire hack-horses, an inglorious measure, if some lustre were not to be reflected on it by killing three or four of them in their harness, that he may reach the race-ground at the moment of starting from the goal. Fame blows her trumpet through all the country immediately, and the newspapers re-echo the report on the morrow, that young Dashwell travelled all night to reach Newmarket, and killed two horses on the road: glorious achievement, worthy to be recorded in the temple of fame, in letters of gold, on pillars of brass!

Arrived at the race-ground, he distinguishes himself more than any of the paltry fellows at the Olympian and Pythian games, so celebrated by the Theban. He clothes himself in a leathern cap, a short waistcoat, long buck-skin small-clothes, and the neatest boots and spurs! mounts the racer, and rides the race. If he dislocates his shoulder, or breaks his collar-bone, the little pain is despised, for the ample compensation of being generally talked of and renowned, as the best gentleman-jockey in the three kingdoms.

But distinctions like this are not sufficient for his

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great soul. He must fight a duel, before his claim to complete heroism, or dashism, can be universally allowed. Nothing more easy than to find an occasion. His best friend will furnish him with one over the next bottle of burgundy. He gives the lie direct; a challenge ensues: the parties meet; one fires without taking aim; the other, into the air; the seconds interfere; the duel is over, the account is drawn up, signed by the seconds, inserted in the morning papers and the glory of both parties established on a basis never to be shaken. Dashwell's business is done, his name is up; he has taken a degree in glory; he was a dashing fellow before; he is now a "d—d dashing fellow."

But to the ambitious, Alps on Alps are continually rising. He wishes to be renowned for his spirit at the gaming table. He stakes the whole reversion of his estate, and loses it with a cool intrepidity that might shame the Cato's and Regulus's of antiquity.

The bottle remains for consolation; and great are his achievements under the banners of Bacchus. But his health declines. His hands shake. His legs totter. He wants a wife as a nurse. He goes, in pursuit of one, into the regions of old Drury, and marries an Amazon as common as a hackney-coach. She becomes a termagant. His dashing spirit, unused to control, and above submission to the loss of fortune, health, and tranquillity, finishes the career of glory with a pistol.

But dashing fellows are not confined to high life. There are multitudes of gentlemen volunteers in this honourable service among the lower orders. Swindlers, pickpockets, and highwaymen, are all dashing fellows. But England, like Athens in this respect, is ungrateful to her great men. As the Athenians banished their distinguished worthies by the ostracism,

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so the English send their heroes into exile by the rigour of their laws. Botany Bay is colonized by dashing fellows; and multitudes are now riding in phaetons, galloping fiery steeds, and living in style, as it is called, on purpose to qualify themselves, on some future day, for this honourable dismission from their native country.

Even the literary community is not without its share of dashing fellows. They chiefly appear in the form of political pamphleteers, paragraph writers, hand-bill authors, and philosophers of a liberal way of thinking. One writes a pamphlet full of seditious and abusive language, that attracts notice for a day, and immediately thinks himself a second Solon. Another scribbles a paltry ode, or poem, in which he asperses, with filth and venom, some virtuous character, and immediately rises in his own estimation to the rank of a Swift or a Butler. A third scribbles quaint paragraphs that would disgrace a chambermaid, so destitute are they of common sense and composition, and then deems himself the wittiest and merriest wight in all Christendom. A fourth, being a philosopher, aims a deadly stroke at Christianity, and rises in his own eyes a polemical Goliah, though the first stone in the sling of a true man, with no higher pretensions than to common sense and common honesty, brings him to the ground. All these are dashing fellows, great in their own opinion, and in the opinion of the little circle connected by similar principles and practices; but great as they appear, the community would feel itself relieved by their honourable banishment to Botany Bay, (if a due regard to the Liberty of the Press could allow such proceedings) as the stomach is refreshed after the evacuation of an emetic.

These dashing characters may be compared to a dashing torrent, all noise, all foam, all violence for a moment, and then spent and exhausted for ever; or

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to a comet, attracting all eyes for a short time, but cheering no system, and perhaps endangering all; or to a kettle-drum, which owes its power of making a noise to brass and emptiness; or to some vile liquors, hot in the mouth, but without a body.

A dashing fellow, indeed, however he may admire himself, or be gazed at by the public, displays so many symptoms of insanity, that, if his real friends were to put him on a strait waistcoat, feed him on bread and water, or take out a statute of lunacy against him, they might be justified by the circumstances, and would probably prevent much injury to himself and to the public.

It is greatly to be wished, that young men who are actuated by the perverse ambition of being distinguished for a conduct and qualities which are mischievous and irrational in the highest degree, would consider that distinction is then only honour, when it is founded on esteem; and that to be talked of, and stared at for extravagance and folly, are but poor compensations for the loss of honour, fortune, health, peace, and life.

True heroism is best displayed by acting a rational, manly, uniform part; and by shewing sense to despise the applause, and spirit to defy the sneers, of fashionable folly, however it may be countenanced by the example of the rich and the noble, by the favour of the great, and the patronage of the powerful. It is meanness and cowardice to yield reason and right to ridicule. It is a spirit worthy of a man, to proceed in the path of rectitude, under the guidance of principle, careless of undeserved censure, and unsolicitous for the admiration of an unthinking multitude. Contrasted with this, the false fire of the dashing fellow is like the blaze of a handful of straw compared to the undiminished radiance of the vestal flame.

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EVENING XXIX.

ON THE ART WHICH HAS LATELY BEEN HONOURED WITH THE NAME OF PUGILISM.

HUMANE and considerate men cannot observe, without concern, the prevalence of a taste for any diversion which contributes to the degradation of human nature. That the taste for boxing, unhappily revived in the present age, has such a tendency, cannot be doubted by those who duly reflect on the principle from which it proceeds, and the consequences it tends to produce.

It originates in a ferocious disposition, and a CONTEMPTUOUS OPINION OF MAN. No gentle and benevolent mind can derive amusement and delight from a spectacle, which must cause pain and danger to those who exhibit it; and none but those who consider man as an animal, not at all superior to the beasts, can endeavour to engage two fellow-creatures in a combat, which, in cool blood, may cause the loss of limbs, and the loss of life. Can he have any idea of the soul's immortality, of man's being made a little lower than the angels; and of the superintendence of the deity; who views with joy, approaching to extasy, two poor wretches endeavouring to maim each other for hire; who makes it the principal business of his life to see such sights, and to promote their frequent repetition; who derives gain from them as well as pleasure, and pursues them with the same ardour and constancy, as others prosecute the study of an honourable profession? Such a taste must proceed from a gross ignorance of better and more manly pleasures, and from a savage heart, restrained only by human laws, from the actual perpetration of the worst cruelty.

The consequences of this taste, to individuals and to society, are truly deplorable. When the combat is announced, all the vilest members of the community are

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eager to partake in an amusement congenial to their corrupted natures. The scene of action is crowded with an assemblage of wretches, who conduct, under their triumphant banners, riot, intemperance, violence; who defy all civil order, all decency, every thing for which laws were enacted, and society established. A successful example is given of disobedience to law, which paves the way to anarchy, revolt, and rebellion. An insult is offered to the civil magistracy, which those who encourage it may hereafter rue, when they feel the consequent depredations on their property, their persons, and their peace.

The lower orders are taught to believe, what indeed they are at all times ready to suppose, that there is an excellence, which the greatest men in the nation may admire, in the exercise of a mere brute force, in defeating their neighbour by violence, without equity; and in striking a terror into the minds of the good and orderly, who are not endowed with muscular vigour and superior size. Government was instituted to protect the weak against the strong; but the boxing rage contributes to increase the tendency of the strong to injure and oppress the weak.

It has been the scope of all who have laboured in the civilization of mankind, to soften the native ferocity of the human heart, to control its propensity to violence and cruelty, to infuse a spirit of mutual benevolence, and teach a willingness to leave the redress of private wrongs to public justice. But the boxing mania does all that can be done in the present enlightened times, to bring back man to his original barbarity, to ignorance, to selfishness, to injustice, to contempt of laws, to infringement of property, to every base and destructive action and inclination which the laws of God and man have uniformly prohibited.

But strongly as the lovers of law and order express

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themselves against this savage taste, there are not wanting men pretending to political wisdom, who advance arguments in its favour. Let what they have urged be fairly considered.

It is said, that the encouragement of boxing promotes a martial and a manly spirit, among those whom the nation may one day call forth to supply her armies and her navies.

I believe it is not agreed that those who excel in muscular strength, or in the skill necessary to exert it in single combat, are superior to others in courage or conduct during the heat of action with a public enemy. A boxer, or a lover of boxing, is not a better soldier or sailor than the hardy husbandman or manufacturer. Superior strength or bulk is not required to pull a trigger, fire a cannon, or climb up a rope. A fist, though tutored by the rules of science,

Qualia vincant
Pythagoran Anytique reum. HOR.

avails little against a sword, a musket, or bayonet, in the hands of a dwarf, or a man who never heard of the name or the art of a pugilist. And, as to the manliness of spirit which boxing, and the love of it, are said to promote, is it not rather a proof of meanness, than manliness, to fight a man in cool blood, for lucre, and to afford amusement to those who pay for admission to the spectacle? Persons who did this, were always numbered among the meanest of mankind, and certainly have no right to be considered of nobler dispositions than tumblers, rope-dancers, riders of two horses, aud fire-eaters, all whose pranks are attended with danger, voluntarily incurred for the sake of lucre.

To bear blows without regarding the pain, to inflict blows without feeling reluctance or compassion, argues, indeed, an insensibility of body and mind; but insensibility can never be deemed a perfection; can never produce that sort of courage which derives

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force from conduct, that sort of manliness which owes its value to its origin in reason. An attempt to reduce men, merely machines in the hands of their superiors, is of so base and ungenerous a nature, that it ought to be reprobated by all who have any real manliness in their character.

The plough and the anvil, the axe and the hammer, will always supply a race of men with sinews strong enough to undergo all the hardships and labour of war; and the native sentiments of such a race, in a land of liberty, will always produce a spirit sufficiently manly, without encouraging any practices which are of necessity, cruel and savage. Cruelty, of every kind and degree, has in it something inherently base and dastardly, and never can be compatible with real heroism. It may make a bully and an assassin, but neither a warrior nor a patriot.

It is also said, that boxing is the natural mode of terminating those disputes which will always arise in the collisions of human intercourse. I grant that in the savage state it may appear to be the natural mode of deciding quarrels; but England has long been in a state of high civilization; and they who, by any mode, endeavour to bring it back again to what is called the state of nature, must give up all pretensions to philosophy and wisdom, and deserve to be marked as the enemies, not only of their country, but of their species. I have heard it even denied that the fist is the natural instrument of attack and defence, since the hand is evidently formed to hold a weapon with greater effect, and since all nations, in the most uncultivated state, use weapons, from the *patoo patoo* of the south sea Islanders, to, the broad sword of the British soldier. But this I only mention as matter of curious speculation; for the fist being less offensive than the sword, would be preferred by the philanthropist.

It is further contended, that, allowing the boxers

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themselves to be a mean and pitiable race, their engagements furnish a manly and improving spectacle to gentlemen who have leisure to seek their own amusement from every thing that can afford it. That it is not a manly spectacle to behold two fellow-creatures injuring each other as much as they can, by brute force, is, I think, evident from what has been already said! and that it is not an improving spectacle, is equally clear, if it be true that the heart, by becoming familiar with scenes of suffering and violence, becomes obdurate at the sight; forgets its best quality, compassion; and feels less reluctance at inflicting pain when under the influence of irascible affections; and that this is true, none will deny, who know the force of habit, and the proneness of the mind to evil.

I believe that those who endeavour to find political reasons to justify the prevalence of a taste for boxing, are scarcely in earnest, and mean little more than to palliate with sophistry, what reason cannot approve. The taste arises among the lower orders, from natural brutality, or a wish to get money by entertaining their superiors in rank, who have disgracefully professed themselves amateurs of the practice. In the higher ranks, it arises from thoughtlessnes, wantonness, and a gross ignorance of better modes of spending time, and filling the chasms, by science, polite arts, and philosophy.

But whatever it originates in, I shall not hesitate to assert, that it is unworthy of a gentleman, unworthy of a good citizen, unworthy of a christian, and unworthy of a man.

I have said little of it in a religious view; though much might be said, for christianity must condemn it entirely, without reserve, and without exception. But it is to be feared, that the fraternity of boxers and their followers will not lend a willing ear to the still small voice of religious conscience. Indeed I do not

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flatter myself with the idea of making converts of them by any thing which can be addressed to them in writing; for it is extremely probable, that those who are sunk so deeply in degeneracy, as to delight in this irrational and disgraceful amusement, take no delight in reading any thing but a sporting calendar, a book of farriery, or a treatise on the "science," as they call, by way of eminence, the theory and sublime art of bruising the flesh, breaking the bones, and sewing up the eyes of their fellow-creatures.

But there is one great teacher who will be heard; and whose arrival may probably be accelerated by reducing the science, which they admire, to practice. His instructions will cause them to see their conduct in a new light, and to despise their choice of spending the short space of life allotted to man in a behaviour more brutal than that of the beasts who perish, but who never exhibit the bloody effects of rage, except when they are impelled by real passion, in defence of their young, or the necessities of hunger.

EVENING XXX.

ON ASSOCIATING WITH EQUALS FOR THE TRUE PLEASURE OF FRIENDSHIP.

The experience of the world has long pronounced those marriages the happiest, in which the contracting parties are of a condition nearly equal; so that, when the first ardours of love are abated by time, neither can assume a superiority, or think it a condescension, to have acceded to the nuptial alliance.

This observation, which is just in matrimony, is no less true in friendship; of which, similar inclinations and similar aversions are said to constitute the only firm foundation. But to like and dislike the same or similar things, is not usual in persons widely separated from each other by birth, rank, and fortune. A great disparity in all these circumstances, causes things to ap-

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pear in different colours, opens diversified prospects in life, and renders the same objects to one desirable, and to the other, indifferent or odious.

Whether, therefore, what the world, in common language, terms friendships, are made between inferiors and superiors, plebeians and patricians, the connection is not properly what the ancients understood by friendship, but a coalition formed by solicitation on one side and condescension on the other, between an expecting dependant, and a powerful patron. An alliance of of this kind, though not abounding in the pleasures of true friendship, may be very useful to both parties, it may serve the necessities or convenience of the superior, and contribute to the interest, preferment, indulgence, and luxury of the inferior; and is therefore very ardently and consistently pursued by those to whom these are the sole or principal objects in the establishment of an amicable intercourse.

But there are some who pursue such connections exclusively of all others; and not so much for the sake of advancing their interest, as gratifying their pride and vanity. They scorn to admit their equals in birth, rank, fortune, and education, to that familiarity which true friendship requires. They hunt for men adorned with titles, or furnished with property, not in the least regarding the recommendation of personal worth. When admitted to the tables and company of such men, they become flatterers and humble servants, but cannot be considered as friends, in the just and honourable sense of that appellation. They are not in a state of liberty. They dare not express their real sentiments, lest they should give offence, and be excluded from the table, to sit at which, they consider as their chief good, their highest honour. If they possess the privilege of being allowed to leave a card at a great man's door, or can say among those whom they consider as their inferiors, that, the other day, they dined

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with their friend, Lord Slender, and must absolutely sup to night with Lady Rout, where they expect to shake hands with an old friend, whom they have not seen some time, the Duke Dolittle; they are supremely happy; they have not lived in vain; heaven has at last rewarded them amply for their pains they took in studying the "open countenance, and thoughts close;" the graces of the person, and the various modes of simulation and dissimulation.

After all, this Lord, Lady, and Duke, only laugh at the poor fellow's folly, admitting him now and then to fill a chair, because he plays cards pretty well, sings a good song, blows the German flute, talks nonsense fluently, or romps with the children.

He, poor mortal! thinks his fortune made. No place becomes vacant, but he imagines his great friends may procure it for him. He knows they mean to do him some service by surprise, while they scarcely ever think about him, and would not give sixpence to save him from a prison. As to the little power they possess in procuring places, it has all been engaged for years to come, in securing the interest of two or three boroughs; and their good friend which is so proud of their friendship stands no more chance of preferment from them, than the pious and learned curate of their parishes, with sixty pounds a year, and a wife and six children.

What advantage, then, has he derived from his splendid connections? Good dinners, good wine, sometimes good company, much amusement, and, some improvement in the airs and manners of a man of fashion. What have these advantages cost him? The loss of real pleasure and benefits he would have derived from his own family connections, from several of his schoolfellows, and his neighbours; every one of whom he has affronted, or deserted, since he first aspired to friendship with people in high life. He meets them either with a supercilious air, and a strut of self consequence

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or with that prodigious affability, and outrageous condescension, which proud people often display while they affect humility; and with which they insult and hurt, while they compliment and caress their dependant. His old friends, thus despised, retaliate upon him richly, and have long stigmatized the would-be-great man, with the mock title of a Count.

Pleasure he may have enjoyed from such connections; pleasure arising from the gratification of pride and vanity; but not the pleasure of cordial friendship. This is only to be found among persons whose condition in life is nearly equal; I say nearly equal, for a mathematical equality can never be found between any two persons, neither is it required for the establishment and enjoyment of friendship. A very considerable latitude must always be allowed to the word equals, when applied to friends; but not that latitude, which separates them at so great a distance, as renders condescension on one part, and submission on the other, necessary to form the unnatural coalition. In the physical attraction of cohesion, two drops containing a quantity of matter nearly equal, will mutually move towards each other; but if one drop is much larger, it will absorb the smaller, and appropriate it entirely. Wood of any kind may be joined to wood, by the common cement of the mechanic; but wood will not coalesce with gold and diamonds, without particular contrivance; and a slight accident will usually dissever the union.

The genuine pleasures of conversation are much diminished by restraint, awe, obsequiousness, and a fear of hurting one's interest in maintaining the free sentiments of conviction. Reason feels itself, in such circumstances, shackled by trammels, which, while they confine the motions, gall by their pressure. Freedom is lost; and it is an old observation, that slavery contributes to de-

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generacy of nature, as well as to misery. And I think it probable, that voluntary slavery is more degrading than compelled, since it argues a natural propensity to that meanness, which coercion is said in time to produce.

But, notwithstanding all that may be said, there are persons who make it the first objects of their lives to seek the friendship of persons greatly their superiors; and who avoid familiarity with their equals, with as much solicitude as they would shun a pestilence. They cultivate the external graces, which in them are unbecoming; they engage in expensive pursuits, which their fortunes cannot support; they waste their time, which might be spent in honourable and lucrative employments, solely that they may dangle after persons in high life, who often despise their meanness, while, for their own accommodation or amusement, they admit their visits, and accept their attentions. Many a one has spent his life in pursuit of glittering phantoms, and lived to repent, in old age, poverty, and desertion, that he did not cultivate those friends, whom Providence had pointed out for his choice, by their proximity of situation, and similitude of manners, rank, and objects in life. Had he chosen his friends in his own sphere, he might have lived in a state of competency, and with respect; but as he chose to soar above them, with wings too feeble to support his flight, he fell unpitied by those whom he deserted, and contemned by those whom he vainly attempted to reach. A toad eater, a led captain, an humble companion, are appellations which no man, who has a sense of real honour, would chuse to possess; but these are the best names bestowed upon men who spend their lives in courting the great by all arts, but those of virtue and truth.

Every man should respect himself as a man. The

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conscious dignity which, in the lowest station, preserves the mind from unmanly meanness, is not the pride against which philosophy protests, and Christian meekness revolts. All respect, indeed, should be paid to superiors in civil rank, which the love of order dictates, which local customs, or national institutions require; which decorum, and even fashion, when she is not exorbitant, may direct: but no man who has a just idea of what it is to be a man, will sacrifice his liberty, his freedom of thinking and speaking, all the frank joys of social intercourse, to a fellow-creature exalted above him, not by personal worth, but by adventitious and hereditary honour; and one who probably never intends to reward the sacrifice, by any thing but a nod and a smile. For such a sacrifice, indeed, no man, however elevated, can make an adequate remuneration.

There is certainly no reason to avoid, but many to seek, the notice and patronage of the worthy great, by worthy conduct; but if the aspirant is a gentleman, by which I mean a man of real honour, duly accomplished by education, he must be admitted to their friendship on terms of perfect equality, as a gentleman; and the distinction of the nobleman must be absorbed in the cordiality of the friend. Otherwise the connection, however glossed by specious names, is like that of the old feudal times, between the lord and his vassal.

What has been said on the necessity of a nearly equal condition, to the existence of true friendship, must be extended to connections with those too much below, as well as those too much above us. But pride is usually a sufficient guard against excessive condescension, in the selection of cordial friends; and it is, indeed, experimentally certain, that low connections are usually the destruction of all the improvements of education, and the refined polish of higher life. But let it be remembered, that when low is synonymous with vul-

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gar, there are many persons very low, who yet are high in rank, and affluent in fortune.

It seems to be no improper conclusion, that, if preferment and promotion are our objects in forming connections, we ought to seek them rationally and by worthy conduct, from superiors; if the enjoyment of social delight and hearty friendship, from our equals; if opportunities of doing good most effectually, from our inferiors; but that no object whatever in forming connections, can justify the sacrifice of freedom, reason, and conscience, which constitute the true dignity of human nature.

EVENING XXXI.

ON THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE MARINE SOCIETY.

SIR,

YOU desired me to write down the few particulars of my life, that you might be able to communicate them to a member of the Marine Society. I comply with your request most readily; but, at the same time, must intreat you to put my narrative into better language than I am able to use, since I never was scholar enough to indite a letter fit for the inspection of any body, but one of my shipmates.

My parents, during the winter, lived in a garret in Kent-street, and followed the employment of raking kennels, picking up rags and bones, and sifting cinders in a neighbouring brickfield. In the summer, they took a journey into Kent, and procured a precarious livelihood by hay-making, harvest work of all kinds, and picking of hops. They journeyed in a decent style, for folks in their condition, having an ass, a pair of panniers, and a tin kettle.

The first event of any great importance to me, which I can remember, was a violent dispute between my father and mother, while they were making tea under a hedge, by the side of the Kent-road. My

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mother, it seems, usually kept the money, and as the hop-picking was just ended, the store was pretty plentiful. My father insisted on taking out of the leathern purse enough to supply him with a dram of gin after tea. My mother peremptorily refused, as she had formed a design of buying me a pair of breeches, as soon as we should reach London. Words were high. My father swore terribly; and after obtaining the purse, by intimidating my mother with an up-lifted hedge stake, walked away, solemnly vowing that he would go on ship-board, and never see us more. My mother, putting the panniers on the ass, and me into one of them, set off in immediate pursuit; but my father, as we supposed, turned out of the road, and we were never able to find him. We pursued our journey, and arrived at our old quarters in Kent-street, at midnight. It was too late to be admitted; and we remained cold and hungry in the street all night. In the morning we expected admission to our lodgings; but the pay being exacted previously to entrance, and it being discovered that we had lost all our money, the ass, panniers, and kettle, were seized for an old debt, and we ourselves turned from the door to seek our fortune.

Beggary was now our only resource. As I had neither shirt, breeches, stockings, nor shoes, and indeed no covering whatever but an old ragged petticoat of my mother's, thrown over my shoulders, I moved the compassion of many passengers, and earned, upon the average, four pence a day. This served to keep us from starving, but could not furnish us with a lodging at night. But there are comforts in all situations. The neighbouring brickhill furnished us with a warm lodging, at no expence. Hither we used to retire, as soon as it was dark, and often slept more soundly than the rich on their beds of down. One morning, however, to my grief and surprise, I found

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my mother dead by my side. She had drunk a little too much gin on the preceding evening, and her health being impaired by grief and want, she fell asleep to wake no more. I knew not what to do. Hunger impelled me to return to the street and beg. I sallied forth with an intention to return again in the evening, and see whether any care had been taken of the corps; but as I was rambling about, I met a boy of similar appearance with myself, and we soon entered into familiar conversation. I told him my wants. He could not relieve them, for his own distresses were equally great; but he undertook to conduct me to the quays, near the Custom-house, where, he said, I might live most luxuriously on sugar, by watching my opportunities to pick and scrape the hogsheads, as soon as they were landed. I listened with delight; and we ran with eagerness to the place, where he said he had lived pleasantly for some months. I found his representation true. Sugar, treacle, and raisins, were our delicious viands. They were often mixed with dirt, for we chiefly picked them from the ground; but hunger is not nice; and though they were filthy, they were sweet. The only misfortune was, that we seldom could procure enough to satisfy the demands of nature; and we were nearly starved to death in the midst of our luscious repasts.

One day as I was busy in scraping the inside of an empty hogshead, I was accosted by a fat, ruddy, old woman, decently dressed, in the following words: "Child," said she, "you seem to be of an active disposition. You might earn a better livelihood than this, if you were inclined to be industrious. If you will come along with me, I will clothe you, and set you up in business that may make your fortune; and as an earnest of my favour, take this roll and cheese." I seized the food, with the voraciousness of a hungry lion, and devoured it before I made the least reply.

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She repeated her question, whether I was willing to go home with her? I scarcely answered for joy; but leaping out of the hogshead, with the utmost agility, placed myself at due distance behind her, to follow wherever she might please to lead. She walked on through various turnings and windings, till she came to a little house in a blind alley, which I have since learned is called Cut-throat Corner.

As soon as I had eaten and drunk sufficiently, she caused me to be washed perfectly clean, and my hair to be cut off almost as close as if I had been shaved. She then clothed me from head to foot, in old and dirty garments, but tolerably tight and warm. You may easily suppose that I was delighted with this change of fortune. I was put to bed on a flock bed, which appeared to me most delicately soft; but I could not sleep for thinking of the happiness I enjoyed.

The next morning, my patroness told me that she had chosen me from many others, whom she had seen on the quays; because she had observed my great activity, and particularly admired the nimbleness of my fingers; that she thought me perfectly well qualified, by nature and genius, for the employment she intended me, and that a few lessons would complete me in the practice; that my business was to ease careless gentlemen and ladies, in crowds, of their watches and pocket-handkerchiefs; and that I must begin with the pocket-handkerchief department. Upon this, she shewed me her pocket, and made me take out her handkerchief a hundred times, till I could do it with a kind of leger-demain, without her perceiving it. I was no unapt scholar; and on the first day of my noviciate, arrived at a considerable degree of dexterity.

"Well," said she, "I will accompany you this evening to the play-house door, and continue in the neighbourhood till the time of business is expected. If you bring home one handkerchief, I shall continue you in

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my service; but remember, if you have no success, I will cause you to be taken up as a pick-pocket, and sent to prison. Go," said she, " and prosper. Improve in your new art; thus may you arrive at riches. Remember that all depends upon your merit."

I arrived at the scene of action, and, with great fear and trembling, began to think of reducing my theory to practice. Often I attempted to *dive*, and as often withdrew my trembling fingers. At last I saw an elderly gentleman, very handsomely dressed in a bag-wig, his hat under one arm, and an umbrella in the other hand. Now, said I, is the time. Now must I succeed in bearing off the prize, or a prison, and poverty, and hunger, will be my lot. This thought urged me to the attempt. I plunged my hand into his pocket. I pulled the handkerchief, but it was pinned to the bottom. The sudden jerk roused the gentleman's attention. He seized me by the collar, and dragged me, without making any disturbance, into a quiet street in the neighboured.

" My lad," said he, " I see you are very young, and your countenance, as far as I can judge by this light, looks ingenuous and honest. I pity you. Perhaps you may have found a friend in me. Tell me by what circumstance you were led to this life of villany?"

I fell down upon my knees, implored his pardon, and told him, in as few words as possible, the heads of my history.

Upon my finishing it, I thought I saw him wipe a drop from his eyes with his white handkerchief; but he turned aside lest I should discover it.

Assuming a stern manner, which I could see was the effect of his judgment acting against his nature, he told me, that though my crime deserved the severe punishment of the law, yet he would endeavour to reform, rather than torment me, if I were good enough,

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and sensible enough, to suffer him to snatch me from destruction.

He added "As you have no friends, or parents, to distress by your absence, you shall go home with me to-night; and to-morrow, I will take such measures with you as I shall see proper." So saying, he called a coach, and making me enter it with him, he ordered it to drive to his house.

Not to tire you with an enumeration of particulars, he recommended me as an object of charity to the Marine Society; and while he related my misfortunes, kindly concealed my crime.

I was cleansed, clothed, instructed, and sent to sea. I enjoyed a happiness which no language can describe, in obtaining the means of earning an honest livelihood. I felt a sentiment of religions gratitude to the Author of my being, and the preserver of my life. I wished to read the scriptures, and was fortunate to find a ship-mate who bestowed great pains upon me, in a long voyage, and taught me, eager as I was to learn, both to read and write. My regularity and diligence gained the esteem of the officers; and whatever favour could be shown me, without blamable partiality, I received. I had been early trained in the school of adversity, and was therefore the better prepared for the school of virtue. I distinguished myself in several engagements in the last war, and had the honour to lose my leg in the service. When the first pain and suffering was over, I felt great consolation in finding myself enriched by a pretty share of the prize-money. With this I took a good accustomed shop in the chandlery line. It succeeded to my wish. I have been married some years to a most industrious woman. I have three boys, all of whom are sent to school, and can read and write well, though the eldest is not nine years old. I am respected by my neighbours; I am in a state of plenty; I am happy.

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And now, Sir, give me leave to request you to make my acknowledgments to the leading men of that admirable society, to which I am indebted for my rescue from all the wretchedness of extreme poverty, united with temptations to extreme wickedness; and for opportunities of becoming an useful member of the community, instead of a bane and a curse. O, Sir! none but those who have actually felt the beneficial effects of this institution, can conceive of them as they deserve. I have felt them; I therefore can form an adequate idea of them; but I want language for expression. Let me conclude my long epistle with a hope, that all who have the superfluities of life, will bestow some of them on the support of a society which patronizes the outcasts of the human race, the naked, the hungry, the vagabond infant, who cannot help himself, and has none to help him; too loathsome with filth, to be borne by delicacy; too obscure and concealed, to be seen by the eye of grandeur.

Since my writing the above, I have heard of the reform in St. George's-fields. God prosper it. Pray present it with the inclosed guinea.

EVENING XXXII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROFESSION ON THE MANNERS AND THE CHARACTER OF THE PROFESSORS.

That the daily actions and professional employments, in which men are conversant, produce an effect on their manners, sentiments, and dispositions, is an opinion which none will be inclined to controvert. Experience evinces that this effect is sometimes beneficial, and sometimes injurious. The immediate causes, and the nature of the influence of profession on character, afford matter of curious and important specuation.

In considering the subject, I shall take a view of the professions of divinity, law, physic, and of the mili-

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tary life. The subject is rather invidious: but in pursuit of truth, the odium resulting from its discovery, must be borne with patience.

It is certain that no assertions can be made on great numbers of men, which will continue to be true of every individual. If they are true in general the exceptions will not diminish their importance.

The clergy of England, considered as a body, constitute a most respectable class; not to be excelled, in all that improves and reflects honour, on human nature, by any other body of the same number in the community. Liberally educated, attentive to character, conversant in acts of Christian benevolence, employed in acquiring and communicating knowledge of the most important kind, they shine as lights in the world, diffusing, like the great luminary in nature, a radiance to guide, and a warmth to foster the erring multitude. Their office, considered speculatively, is most honourable and beneficent; and without flattery, it may be affirmed, that the clergy of England have acted up to it in practice, with a comparative uniformity of wisdom and virtue, which bears ample testimony to the truth of their religion, and refutes the infidel more effectually than all the folios of polemic disputation.

Thus they appear in their official or professional capacity. In familiar life, and the common intercourse of vicinity, they are social, pleasant, elegant, improving, and charitable. They cultivate every thing that can embellish and refine, together with all that can enlighten, soften, civilize, and purify the manners of society.

The important business of education has devolved upon them almost entirely, by the tacit consent even of the irreligious; a consent arising from conviction, that their morals and attainments usually render them

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the fittest persons to conduct it, with the greatest skill and fidelity. The princes and nobles of the land derive from their instructions, the wisdom and the eloquence necessary to govern nations; and the union of those brilliant and solid accomplishments, which add fresh lustre, and intrinsic weight, to crowns and coronets, stars and ribands. The lowest of the people find from the exertions of the clergy, an education suited to their humble sphere, leading to useful qualifications, inspiring religious principles, and all the humble virtues of industry. The clergy have confessedly handed down the torch of science from generation to generation, which, without their care, might have been long ago extinguished.

They are, indeed, pholosophers dispersed over the nation; philosophers, but with all the pride of philosophy melted down by the charity and humility of the Christian; philosophers, but without the useless seclusion of mere contemplative life; philosophers, but such as bring down wisdom from heights inaccessible to the vulgar, and cause her to walk familiarily in the common road, among all the sons of men, without any exclusive distinction of riches and honours, loving and serving them all as children of the same Parent, as inheritors of the same glory.

But is there no shade in the picture? Is there no dross in the ore? I believe there is as little imperfection in the whole order, as the common infirmity of human nature allows; but that little is usually magnified by the tongues of those who, unfortunately for themselves, endeavour to wound religion through the sides of her ministers. It is easy to account for the malignant representations of a Shaftesbury and a Hume. The cause of their hatred of the clergy, must destroy its effect on every mind, which unites candour with good sense.

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But it seems reasonable to suppose, that some less laudable habits and dispositions may be caused by a few untoward circumstances attending their profession. It certainly affords them much leisure; and leisure is a temptation to indolence; indolence is a parent of luxury, gluttony, and intemperance. It leads to a taste for trifles, to a love of the various games of chance, of field sports, and all the ingenious contrivances for killing time. Happy, if it is confined to pastimes that are inoffensive, and negatively good; since the experience of the world has long established, as an incontestable truth, that idleness is the root of all evil. It cannot be expected, that all the individuals of a very numerous class, should possess inclination and ability for the pursuits of literature. To such, the mere business of supplying a church cannot afford avocation enough to employ their time. As they have no taste for study or composition, they have recourse to the easy modes of supplying their pulpit, which modern contrivances amply furnish; and after expending a few pounds in this way, they have little to interrupt the studies of the card-table, and the amusements of the gun, the dog, the horse, and the bottle.

The love of money, as well as the love of pleasure, in excess, has been laid to their charge. Appearances may sometimes confirm the imputation. Their incomes are often small, and drop at once on their demise. A desire, therefore, to obtain independence in old age, or to provide for a family, leads to a parsimonious attention, which, by a hasty judgment, will be pronounced avarice. Their claims for tithes are made on those who, from their sordid dispositions, pay with reluctance, and are glad to resent a just demand, by stigmatizing him who makes it, with the epithet, covetous. The charge is often unjust; but yet it is easy to observe that frugality commonly degenerates in old age to downright and extreme avarice.

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A mean submission to superiors, for the sake of emolument, is another characteristic which has been supposed to mark the profession. While men are actuated by the hope of gain, and the spur of ambition, they will take the most effectual methods of obtaining the object of their desire. And it happens unfortunately, that those who bestow preferment, are not so likely to bestow it on merit, of which they are often but incompetent judges; as on a submission to their will, and a subserviency to their purpose of pleasure, avarice, and ambition. The dog that fawns, it is remarked gets more bones and fragments from the master's table, than the surly mastiff who barks and growls, yet guards the house from the midnight depredator. Unmanly obsequiousness in this profession, may be easily accounted for; but cannot be palliated in any other way, than by pleading the infirmity of human nature.

Much has been said on the *odium theologicum*, or the bitter hatred of divines, as if they were, above all men, implacable in their resentments. This aspersion might adhere to them in times of ignorance and barbarity; but in the present times, is totally inapplicable. The opinion arose from the unhappy virulence of controversialists. But among them also, the charge admits of extenuation or excuse. It was thrown upon them by their enemies; and if they gave any apparent occasion for it, which I fear must be acknowledged, let it be candidly believed, that their intemperate zeal arose from their earnestness and sincerity; honest qualities, and respectable even in a mistaken cause.

If these, or any other circumstances of the theological profession, lead to foibles or faults; to levities or vices; to pride or meanness; it will be right to guard with double vigilance against an assault in the weakest place. "Let not your good be evil spoken of," is a scriptural caution. It is peculiarly necessary to avoid

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this evil in the church; because not only the individuals who are censured, suffer, but the church itself, and those over whom they are appointed to watch as shepherds; and before whom they are to walk as exemplary guides. Methodists and infidels are equally extreme to mark what is done amiss by that order which is countenanced and protected by church and state. Their severity is unchristian and irrational: but, such is the malignity of mankind, that it is found to serve their cause, by making proselytes to their opinions. And I fear, it is not a false alarm, nor a needless admonition, to say, that both these descriptions of men have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished. But how diminished? Not by persecution, but by the mild, yet irresistible compulsion of sound argument, enforced by a brilliant example of Christian perfection. I must retract the word perfection. None of us can reach it; and woe to them who judge others, whether believers or unbelievers, clergy or laity, methodists or atheists, with excessive rigour. All men are servants of one Master, by whose judgment they shall stand or fall. Let each judge himself with severity; but all others, with that lenity, which himself must most devoutly wish for, at the tribunal of the righteous Judge.

EVENING XXXIII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ON THE MANNERS.

If great respect is paid to speculative science, to pure mathematics, to astronomy, to metaphysics, to all the effects of ingenuity which terminate in the sublime and refined pleasure of intellectual exercise; how much more justly is it due to a science which prepares itself by speculation, merely that it may descend to practice; that it may learn to assuage the agony of pain, resus-

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citate the langour of sickness, preserve or restore the impaired senses, render old age easy, and lengthen life? A speculative philosopher, however excellent, even a Newton and a Locke, weighed in the scales of reason, against a practising physician of skill and virtues like those of a Heberden, or a Willis, kick the beam like the gossamer that floats in the air, balanced with a wedge of bullion.

As life abounds with misery, they are to be considered as the greatest men, and the most honourable members of society, who are best able to relieve it. What avails it to miserable man (*ægris mortalibus*, as Virgil feelingly expresses it) that a new planet is discovered; or a new moon belonging to an old planet; or the doctrine of innate ideas; or liberty and necessity, confirmed or invalidated? But it concerns him beyond expression, when a remedy is pointed out for the gout, the stone, a fever; for blindness, deafness, lameness, madness; for the preservation of his life, or the lives of those, in whom his whole happiness is involved.

The profession of a physician is, therefore, worthy of high honour, and will receive it from those who form a a just idea of real utility, and bestow their esteem, not on the dazzling objects of empty pretension, but on that which confers the most substantial and unequivocal benefit on the human race.

Thus noble is the profession of medicine; and the professors of it in England, have usually acted up to its dignity. Deeply learned in philosophy; well versed in polite letters; adorned with arts; graced with social accomplishments; and, above all, tinctured with humanity; they have charmed in the common intercourse of conversation, and approached the sick-bed with the appearance of guardian angels.

The common-place wit on the inutility of the science,

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and the vanity and venality of its professors, will be little regarded by him who has felt its benign operation on himself, or seen it displayed with the skill and compassion of a superior Being, on those whom he loved; in the hour of unspeakable tribulation, when hope, the last friend of the distressed, began to spread her wings, and prepare for departure: who has also seen the preserver of a family's peace, in his social evening, diffusing the brilliancy of wit, and the radiance of knowledge, with a gay cheerfulness of heart and countenance, arising from the consciousness of having spent the day in alleviating woe.

Who but must lament that any circumstances in such a professsion, should lead to a behaviour exposed to satire or ridicule? But they say (to use a favourite though rather a detracting phrase of an ingenious prelate), they say, that physicians are pompous, self-sufficient, affectedly solemn, venal, and unfeeling.

The great respect which is usually and very properly paid to their directions, by the anxious persons who solicit their assistance, may, perhaps, accustom them to consider themselves entitled to a kind of despotism. Of the physician it may be said, he rules over willing slaves:* and his air of self-sufficiency and pomp, though exposed to the witticism of the comic muse, may produce, at the bedside of the invalid, a beneficial effect. Confidence raises in the patient and the bystanders a high opinion of the doctor; especially among the lower ranks of people. They have observed but little, who have not remarked, how much imagination contributes to give success to the curative power of a medicine. If the pomp and self-sufficiency thus adopted, in the exercise of the art, are likely to extend themselves to common life, they are in danger of just

* Per populos dat jura volentes; VIRG.

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derision; and therefore, a sensible physician will be on his guard, lest a behaviour, which on some occasions, may be proper and useful, should, by becoming habitual, and appearing at improper times, sully a character which has a right to shine with undiminished lustre.

The appearance of mystery, which is often blamed, is not without good effects on patients, who, from a natural propensity of human nature, are apt to venerate, and confide in most, what they least understand. Many, if they were fully to comprehend the nature of the remedies administered, would despise, and refuse to apply them. The satire and ridicule so liberally, or rather illiberally, thrown on the physician for these appearances, in the exercise of his profession, is unjust; and ought then only to be applied to him, when he assumes them in the scenes of domestic and social life.

That physicians are peculiarly venal, is, I believe, false. Few can be named who do not give much of their time and skill to the afflicted poor, to their own professions, and to the clergy, without accepting the smallest recompense. Many have been known to return great part of exorbitant fees, given by the grateful rich, endeavouring to proportion their own remuneration to the good they may have been able to do, and the attendance they have been obliged to give. But the assumption of a profession will not alter a radical disposition of the heart. Some among the medical class, as well as in all other classes, are naturally covetous; and the meanness and harpy avarice of a few, has unjustly been suffered to fix a mark of disgrace on all. The common fee of a physician, considering the expence of his education, and that he sells no medicine, is moderate; nor can he be blamed, who accepts, under the guidance of discretion and humanity, the recompense of an employment by which himself, and perhaps a family, are to be supported.

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That medical men are unfeeling, is an opinion, which arises from their coolness and dispassionate deportment in the midst of deep distress. But this command of their feelings is a prime excellence in their character. While all around them are embarrassed and debilitated by sorrow, they are called upon to act with wisdom and judgment. Were they to sink under sympathy, the patient whom they came to relieve, must be neglected, or attended to with faculties deranged, confused, and unable to prescribe with decision.

But still it must be allowed, that an habitual sight of distress, diminishes sensibility. Physicians, therefore, who act with humanity, as the greater part certainly do, are the more to be esteemed, since they counteract the effect of their familiarity with scenes of suffering, by the control of their reason. If without feeling, they act with all the kind attention which feeling would cause, combined with the steadiness of cool judgment, which excessive feeling might shake, they are entitled to the praise, which mere animal or instinctive sensibility can never deserve.

I do not find any peculiar failing originating from the circumstances of the profession, in the character of the physician; and those which are alleged by prejudice and vulgarity, are either non-entities, or such infirmities as fall to the lot of all men. If there is any thing singular in this profession, it is singular ingenuity, singular politeness, and singular beneficence. As to the empirical tribe, the disgrace of society; the reverse of every thing said in praise of the physician, will, in general, be applicable to them; and it must be the wish of all benevolent men, that the deceptions which they obtrude on afflicted poverty and ignorance, were by authority of law, cognizable by a court of sworn physicians, and punishable by a severe penalty.

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There are few greater abuses in a community, than that of picking the pockets of those who are already distressed by penury and disease united; and preventing them from applying where relief might be obtained, by holding out specious pretensions corroborated by false and venal testimonies. The ridicule and censure which have been unjustly thrown on the physicians, are justly due to the quack-doctors. They are, indeed, pompous, self-sufficient, affectedly solemn, venal, and unfeeling with a vengeance. If there were a tribunal at which the assumption of doctor's degrees could be investigated, it might be serviceable in detecting and exposing one mode of deceit, by which ignorant empirics impose on vulgar credulity.

Surgeons and apothecaries regularly trained and improved by experience, may certainly take a rank next to the physician. Their skill and humanity in the present age, entitle them to a more honourable place in society, than they have formerly been allowed. Men of sense are not guided in their judgment by an appellation. Surgeons and apothecaries enjoying and using the opportunities for improvement, which, in these times, are afforded more plentifully than ever, become, in effect, and in the liberal sense of the term, physicians. From their extensive researches, and from their general intercourse in families, their minds are as enlightened, and their conversation as polite and agreeable, as those of any order in the community.

I cannot dismiss this part of my subject without doing justice to the university of Edinburgh, by acknowledging that much of that superior excellence which distinguishes the medical classes in all their branches, throughout Great Britain, is derived from the instruction it affords. Edinburgh, as a place of medical education, has confessedly surpassed, not only Oxford and Cambridge, but the universities of all Europe.

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EVENING XXXIV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW ON THE MANNERS.

LAW, the accumulated wisdom of ages, forms a stately and massy pile, which it is impossible to contemplate without feeling a reverential regard, resembling, in some degree, religious adoration. The aggregated decisions of the wisest and best of men, augmented, retrenched, corrected by the cautious hand of experience, and at last confirmed and compacted by the slow but powerful operation of time, demand an admiration of their excellence, and an acquiescence in their wisdom, almost equal to the implicit submission paid to revelations from on High.

Those men, therefore, in society, whose office it is to preserve the law, to expound it, and to administer it, deserve, if they execute their office well, to wear the robe of distinction, and to be seated at the right hand of the prince. While they poise the scales of equity, and wield the sword of justice, let them wear the wreath of civic honour.

But a truce with the flights of imaginary perfection. Law, however pure and excellent in itself, is but a dead letter, till it is called into life by the activity of man; of man, weak in his nature, corrupt in his will, and prone to pervert the best things for the narrow purposes of selfish advantage.

Law constitutes a venal profession, in which the sublime views of equity are often obscured and lost, in the misty mazes of chicane. Cunning, as often as wisdom, assumes the office of interpretation, and, by successful subtilty, rises to high honours among men, and enjoys the recompense of that wisdom which she has ingeniously aped, though she could not equal. The great lawyers, who have reached the highest honours of the profession, and been ennobled, began their career

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as advocates at the tribunal. As advocates, their study was not so much to point out the law as it really existed, as to sophisticate the letter, and misrepresent the spirit of it, in order to serve the temporary purpose of the client who paid the fee. As hired advocates, they were obliged in honour (a sort of honour which binds even highwaymen) to defend, with all their knowledge and eloquence, the cause they undertook, whether right or wrong; and thus a plausible sophistry was often of higher value, and more ardently studied, than truth, reason, law, or equity. To gain the cause was the object; not to illustrate law; not to do justice between man and man; but to gain the cause;—which was, in effect, to gain popularity, employments, riches, office, and perhaps, at last, titular distinction.

But minds thus habituated to sophistry, are in danger of suffering cunning to become their predominant quality, conspicuous in every part of life. Having found it successful in their profession, they infer its efficacy in the commerce of society, in common intercourse, and in familiar conversation. But cunning, it has long been observed, is not compatible with greatness of mind, or comprehensive wisdom; and it is remarkable, that the most successful advocates at the bar, have not usually been the best ministers of state, members of parliament, magistrates, patriots, or men.

Great cunning is, indeed, scarcely compatible with strict honesty. It tempts to the violation of it by pointing out the means and by suggesting the chances of impunity. Characters, therefore, in the law, which have been admired for ability, have often been viewed with suspicion, on the points of integrity and principle. The appearances of them have been supposed by the world to be adopted from the same cunning which has regulated every part of their conduct, and laid the foundation of riches and honours. Few famous advocates

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and practising lawyers, therefore, considering the great numbers in the profession, are ranked among the great benefactors of mankind. After their death, and when the interested individuals, who have been served by their cunning, have been silenced by the universal Leveller, they have been considered as little more than "artful fabricators of their own fortune."* No idea has been attached to them, in the least resembling such as are affixed to the character of the Solons, the Lycurgi, the Numæ, and the Minos's of antiquity.

It is, indeed, a standing proof of the little intrinsic value of human honours, that they have been lavished, with peculiar profusion, on a profession singularly selfish, and singularly disposed to injure the great interests of society, for the advantage of particulars. But its success in the world is easily accounted for. It makes cordial friends, by serving secular purposes; by securing victory in doubtful rivalries; by assisting men in things which they are apt to deem paramount to all, in the great contests for riches, power, and honour. The glorious uncertainty of the law renders it, in the hands of a skilful practitioner, an instrument to his avarice and ambition, in being made to bend, like a leaden rule, to the wishes and views of every bountiful employer.

But if the profession of the law has this corrupting influence on the minds of the advocates, men usually improved by a liberal education, and elevated by nobler views, how baneful must be its operation on the lower practitioners! how much more so on the pettyfoggers; men, low in rank, low in principle, and low in education! But here I will observe a tender silence. I am unwilling to inflame that odium, which confounding the innocent with the guilty, has branded the whole

* Faber quisque fortunæ suæ. Cic.

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tribe with charges of duplicity, management, artifice, and trickishness, approaching to the imputation of arrant knavery. I mean not to satirise, but to admonish. If there are peculiar circumstances in the lower parts of the profession, which tempt to a disingenuous, over-reaching, crooked conduct, let the professors be doubly guarded against them, as men, in the first place; and in the second, as men, in a profession. It is certain, that a fair character, exclusively of all ideas of the loveliness and virtue of rectitude, is the most conducive to success in the business of an attorney. And let no prospect of present gain tempt a man to hazard an imputation on his character; a loss, which the gain of dishonest practice can never compensate.

The letter of the law allows many things which are extremely hard, if not strictly unjust. Those who are obliged to act by the letter of the law, unfortunately incur a blame in such cases, which is certainly not their due. But a man of sense and humanity, who values his character and conscience, will avoid, as much as possible, such practice as leads to the doing what is rigid, under the sanction of what is lawful. Petty litigation affords very dangerous temptations to the commission of cruelty, the suppression of truth, the propagation of scandal, and the support of plausible falsehood. Men whose natural dispositions and acquired principles reprobate such things, are sometimes ensnared into them by the untoward circumstances of their professional employment. The world should make some allowances for a conduct, which though far from laudable, is rendered, by the entanglements of a difficult and dangerous business, not easy to be avoided.

Unnecessary reserve and caution are observed to mark the conversation of many in this profession; a reserve and caution acquired by attending to the force

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of words in legal instruments, and the various meaning that are often given to little or no meaning in courts of judicature. But these frigid qualities cast a damp on the ardour of cordial familiarity, give an alarm of design, and either shut up the mouths of the company or render the discourse stiff, formal, and insincere, from a superfluity of circumspection.

A disposition to wrangle, contradict, and controvert opinions on trifling subjects; to argue, not on points of real consequence, but about a pin's point; a captiousness, a dictatorial air, a supercilious insolence, and a perpetual attempt at wit, derived from imitating eminent counsellors at the bar, often spoil the conversation of men who, from their evident talents in the practice of the law, might be expected to furnish improving topics of friendly discourse. But these are foibles little to be regarded in men, who preserve their characters in weighter matters, free from just reproach,

And notwithstanding the dangers peculiar to the business of an advocate, and the practice of an attorney, there are, doubtless, a large majority, who overcome them all; who walk through the mazes of a wilderness, without deviating into crooked paths, without wounding themselves with the brambles, or defiling themselves with the mire.

EVENING XXXV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY PROFESSION ON THE MANNERS, WITH A GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE SUBJECT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the historian records, with all the dignity of language, the achievements of the warrior; the orator celebrates him in the most splendid panegyric; the poet adds new brilliancy to his character, by the colours of fancy, and the graces of diction; yet that state of war which gives opportunities for all this display of glory, cannot but appear, in the eyes of phi-

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losophy and religion, not only the calamity, but the disgrace of human nature. Neither the purposes of regal ambition, nor the pretences of political interest and national aggrandizement, nothing, but inevitable necessity and self-defence, can justify a state of war; that state, which spreads misery and desolation, and instigates poor short-sighted and short-lived fellow-creatures to cut off each other, as far as they are able, from the face of the earth, on which God placed them to be happy.

But in vain do reason and philosophy lift up their voices amidst the tumultuous din of disordered passions. War always subsisted on some part of the globe, and will probably continue, while false politics and corrupt and malignant passions predominate, and while the vices of men require a scourge.

Men in the miliiary profession are not culpable for the existence of a state which they found established before they were born, and which it is not in their power, if it were their inclination, to alter. Their profession has always been deemed one of the most honourable. As things are constituted, and as they have generally conducted themselves, their claim to honour may, I believe, remain undisputed. While we lament that such an order of men should have been found necessary, we may freely bestow that praise which the virtues of individuals engaged in it deserve.

Courage is, obviously, a prime requisite in this profession. It has, of course, been cultivated, encouraged, and displayed by it in high perfection. But courage, when it does not arise from animal insensibility, is connected with every generous virtue. The soldier has therefore been distinguished for openness, honour, truth, and liberality. To the solid virtues, he has also added the high polish of urbane and easy manners. His various commerce with the living world has rub-

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bed off those asperities, and extended that narrowness, which too often adhere to the virtuous recluse. And perhaps it is difficult to exhibit human nature in a more amiable and honourable light, than it appears in the accomplished soldier; in the soldier, fully prepared for his profession by a liberal education, and finished, through the favourable circumstances of it, by all those qualities which render men generous in principle, and agreeable in conversation.

But all the professions are found to have some circumstances unfavourable, as well as favourable, to rectitude and propriety; some peculiar temptations which lead imperceptibly, without uncommon caution, to error, absurdity, and vice. I endeavour to point them out, not with a desire to disgrace, but to add new honours to the profession, and to render what sullies them more conspicuous, that it may be more easily avoided. He who fixes a buoy over a rock or a quicksand, does not intimate by it, that navigation is not to be followed or encouraged; but by pointing out local and partial danger, facilitates and secures the increase and success of navigation.

The profession of a soldier naturally leads to the cultivation of bodily strength, agility, and grace. But a great attention to the body, especially at an early age, may preclude that attention to the mind which is necessary to solid improvement. There is therefore danger, lest only a superficial knowledge of letters, or even ignorance of a very disgraceful kind, should be a characteristic of a great number in the profession. But ignorance must always lower the character of a gentleman. It may also lead to a variety of follies, scarcely to be avoided by him who, possessing a great deal of leisure, knows not how to employ it in the amusements of a library, or in the conversation of intelligent society.

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But exclusively of the general knowledge, which, in the present age, is necessary to all who support with consistency, the character of a gentleman, there is a great deal of professional science required to form the accomplished soldier. Many parts of mathematics, tactics, fortification, geography, and modern history, those parts more particularly which describe battles and sieges, are no less necessary to make an officer, than his commission.

The lives of great generals are well worth the attention of those who mean to arrive at a distinguished height in military excellence. The writers on the art military (*scriptores de re militari*) both ancient and modern, will also claim a considerable share of his application.

The art of drawing must be singularly useful to the soldier; forming, if he has any natural turn to it, a most pleasing amusement, and a very valuable qualification for the exercise of his profession.

The soldier who neglects all these, to attend solely to external grace and bodily exercise, must have a mind empty of every solid attainment, and open to the admission of vanity and vice. And there is great danger lest he should neglect them, arising from the uncommon temptations to gaiety and dissipation which surround his profession. Acceptable to all companies, caressed by the gay, and admired by the fair, he finds it difficult to withdraw his attention from the lively scene before him, to devote it to study and contemplation. He is in peculiar danger of falling into licentiousness and libertinism. Experience has confirmed what speculation has suggested. All the dissolute manners of idleness, habits of excessive drinking and debauchery; habits of gaming, swearing, expence, and contracting debt, have too often disgraced a profession, which men have ever been inclined to treat with

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honour; and rendered a mode of life, which is at best exposed to many evils and inconveniences, infinitely more uncomfortable, by pecuniary distress and bodily disease.

The naval officer must be comprehended under the military profession. The sun in his whole progress through the heavens does not behold a class of men more uniformly generous, manly, and brave, than the accomplished British sailor. But the circumstances of his profession, resembling in many respects those of the land officer, lead to a disregard of prudence and sobriety, and all those unostentatious virtues of economy, which, in the exuberant generosity of his noble heart, he is apt to dispise as narrow, spiritless, and unbecoming his character. The consequence, however, of neglecting them, must of necessity be the same in all professions, embarrassment, distress, ill health, and uneasy reflection.

I have now, according to my design, taken a cursory view of the four professions; those of divinity, of physic, of law, and of arms. I have endeavoured to point out a few evils, which the circumstances attending each of them have a natural tendency to produce; and this I have done, not with the malignant purpose of exposing or reviling them, but with the well-intended aim of admonishing young men of the danger, that it may be more easily avoided.

To confirm my idea that particular professions are subject to peculiar errors, arising from their circumstances, I shall close the subject with quoting a passage from Dr. Powel's Discourses on the Vices incident to an academical life.

"There are," says he, "writers of some reputation in physic, who have undertaken to explain, to what particular diseases men are exposed by each profession and employment. Whatever their success has been,

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their design was certainly good; and if the attempt is not too difficult, it will be useful to pursue the same plan in our moral inquiries. We frequently exhort every man to observe with care, the complexion and temper of his soul, and to apply all such remedies as may either prevent or palliate those disorders to which his natural constitution makes him subject. But every man is not able to judge of his own dispositions; and what we call nature, is more often habit. It would be well therefore, if we could assist the diligent searcher of his heart, by shewing him what vices usually accompany his situation and circumstances. He will more easily discover his own personal character, if he is acquainted with that of the rank or order to which he belongs.

"Very little pains have been employed by any moral writers to this purpose. They have told us, perhaps, what are the faults of youth and of age, what the dangers of riches and poverty; but if any thing has been said concerning the characters of particular professions, it has been by the satirist, not the serious moralist."

Let me be permitted to adopt his conclusion, and apply it to my preceding observations.

"Ought we not, therefore, it may be asked, to fly from stations where our virtue and happiness are exposed to so many dangers? Alas! whither shall we fly? What place, what scene of life can promise us security? Each condition is surrounded with different indeed, but almost equal difficulties. Each, too, has its peculiar advantages to compensate those difficulties, and possibly none may have greater than our own. Nor are the foregoing observations to be understood so strictly, as if they never failed in any instance. Let it not be imagined that the incident to an order, must necessarily adhere to all the individuals who compose it. Few are so unfortunate as to be hit by every weapon

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which the enemy aims against them. And some, perhaps either by the natural activity and vigour of their minds, may avoid, or with the shield of reason and religion, may repel them all. If this were impossible, the inquiry in which we have been engaged would be useless. These reflections can serve no other purpose, but that, knowing to what vices our situation inclines us, we may, by continual efforts and firm resolutions, bend all our faculties towards the opposite virtues; and having extricated ourselves from the sins which must easily beset us, may run with patience the race that is set before us."

EVENING XXXVI.

ON THE AMUSEMENT OF ARCHERY, AND OTHER DIVERSIONS.

As in every opulent and peaceful country, a great part of mankind live in the world principally to take their pastime in it; it is happy when a taste prevails for such amusements as, while they add grace, health, and vigour to the body, have no tendency to enfeeble and corrupt the mind. The revival of archery has lately received the sanction of fashion; and fortunately, it is a diversion which deserves, at the same time, the approbation of reason. It is manly, without partaking of ferocity; it is pleasing though, at the same time, most remote from the pleasures of effeminacy. It deserves encouragement, that it may counteract, on one hand, the prevalence of a pugilistic taste; and, on the other, of an enervating delight in domestic games of chance.

The amusement of tennis ought also to be encouraged, as an exercise; since it is capable of being enjoyed in the worst weather, and the worst seasons; and in England there is so much bad weather, and so long a winter, that archery can be pursued but for a

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short time in the whole year. Tennis, or the *pilæ ludus* is a truly classical game; highly esteemed by the most respectable Greeks and Romans; mentioned by Homer, Herodotus, Pliny, Horace; and recommended by Galen as one of the most salutary exercises. It ought not to be forgotten that the ball, the little implement which has afforded so much health and pleasure, is said to have been invented by Aganella, a beautiful young lady of Corcyra, who presented the first she ever made, with directions how to use it, to the princess Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous. Whether it required much genius to invent it, is a disquisition into which I shall not enter, lest it should terminate in detraction from the beautiful Aganella. Her memory is entitled to be a toast of the cricketers and tennis players, without any such invidious inquiry

Hawking was once as much in fashion as archery is at present. No country gentleman could well maintain his right to that character without a hawk on his fist. But it was an expensive, a dangerous, and a troublesome diversion. The sportsmen, while their eyes were fixed on the birds in the air, often found themselves plunged into a ditch or a horse-pond.

There is a pretty diversion said, in the Relations of Sir Anthony Sherlies, to have been followed by the Persian kings, which may be called hawking in miniature. Sparrows, instead of hawks, are reclaimed, as the term is, or broken in, and taught to fly after butterflies, and bring them to their masters. If our English sparrows could be rendered equally docile, which I much doubt, it would be a delightful summer amusement for the ladies in the flower-gardens, and a very useful employment for those students in natural history, who admire and collect insects of the papilionaceous tribe.

Angling seems never to have been a very fashionable

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amusement, though very ardently pursued by its votaries. Some degree of cruelty attending it, has contributed to bring it into disrepute. It requires a great degree of stillness, silence, patience; and a skill and discernment in times, seasons, waters, baits, weather, and many minute articles which fashionable people of pleasure are not very willing to exercise. For the consolation of anglers I will cite a passage on their art from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. "Plutarch," says he, "speaks against all fishing, as a filthy, base, illiberal employment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labour. But he that shall consider the variety of baits for all seasons, and the pretty devices which our anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, &c. will say that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest, and is to be preferred before many of them; because hawking and hunting are very laborious; much riding, and many dangers accompany them; but this is still and quiet; and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk by the brook side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of birds; he sees the swans, herons, and many other fowl, with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds, or blast of horns, and all the sport that they can make."

Angling certainly excites the hopes and fears of those who pursue it earnestly, as much as any other of the sports; and therefore answers all the purposes of rural diversion; and as to the charge of cruelty, I am afraid none of the sports are more entitled to an exemption from it. Angling, however, on many accounts, is not likely to become a fashionable sport; and is justly called, in the title of the best book upon it, the Con-

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templative Man's Recreation. It is conducted in silence and solitude; it makes no ostentatious appearance; it seldom displays agility, grace, or strength, and therefore is not accommodated to the views of those, who seek their pleasure in the eyes of their observers.

To archery no cruelty can be objected. Nothing is killed; nothing is hunted. There is in it trial of skill which excites a pleasing emulation; and hope and fear are gently, and therefore agreeably, agitated. There is also an elegance in the instruments, and a pleasing imitation of old English manners in the dress and appearance of the bowmen. I think it probable that the nation will soon have a large army of archers, and I wish it may have no occasion for any other.

The revival of a taste for archery has revived an attention to an old book which used to sleep on the shelves, and to be disturbed by none but a few literary virtuosi; the Toxophilus of Ascham. It has of late been much read by those who hoped to improve their skill in the management of the bow and arrow, by its instructions. In this, I believe, they have been disappointed. Manual dexterity is chiefly improved by practice. Theory and written directions oftener puzzle than explain, when they are applied to arts which are most effectually advanced to perfection, by what is called a knack, or an habitual facility derived from repeated and mechanical experience.

But Ascham's book deserves the attention of the schalar, not only as a curious, but as an excellent specimen; for excellent it may be proved, if the time of its appearance is taken into consideration. Ascham formed his style on the model of the ancients. Accustomed to write Latin, he caught the rhythm of classical composition, and transferred it to his own language. He made a great effort in reaching the excellence he attained; since his own country afforded him no good

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models. He who, under such disadvantages, could write so good a style, must have been possessed of extraordinary ability. But though I deem his style excellent as an imitation of the ancients, and as an early effort in English literature; yet, I am sensible, that those who have been only conversant with the polished language of late writers, will condemn it as stiff, formal, awkward, and pedantic. It has, on many occasions, a just right to these epithets. Yet, on the other hand, it is strong, forcible, nervous, and emphatic. But when I number him among the successful imitators of the ancients, I mean that he is such an imitator as that builder would be, who after seeing the marble remains of antiquity at Rome, should come home and erect structures, similar in form, with brick or with wooden materials. Ascham's School-master is in many parts, more eloquent than his Toxophilus.

The Toxophilus of Ascham suggests an idea that the author was himself a great lover of the bow and arrow. But I think it rather doubtful, whether so severe a scholar was greatly addicted to an amusement, which, however it was honoured at court, was considered in those times as too light and trifling for a scholar. I rather think poor Ascham wrote solely on this subject from the mercenary motive of attaining a pension from the eighth Henry. There are several passages in his letters which led directly to this surmise. "I wrote my Toxophilus," says he, "not so much with a design to do honour to archery, or to direct the practice of it, as to try the experiment, whether the treatise might not improve my circumstances, which are low indeed, lower than the common condition of the studious; for I found that several persons had received very great favours from his Majesty, as rewards for their skill in archery."

Ascham was not disappointed. The king gave him

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a pension of ten pounds a-year, estimated as equivalent to a hundred at the present period. It is a melancholy reflection, that he might have lived and died in extreme penury, notwithstanding his great merits in various departments of learning, if he had not sagaciously written on a subject which drew the attention of the king, and gratified his prevailing taste. Ascham in this instance, proved himself a good toxophilite. He took a good aim, shot with strength and skill, and fixed his arrow in the target. All honest bowmen must wish that he had lived to enjoy his good fortune longer. But he was a valetudinarian, like most of the laborious students of his day, and died at fifty-three. Had he practised the art which he commended, a little more, he probably would have enjoyed better health, and might have lived to produce books far superior to his Toxophilus and his School-master.

But to return from the old treatise on archery to the practice of it in the present age. The ladies seem to be ambitious of shooting darts, in a literal sense, as they have long been celebrated for doing execution by their figurative artillery. Above the childish bow and arrow of little Cupid, they take the weapons of the warrior, and emulate the prowess of Robin Hood and Ulysses. Venus armed, has been the subject of several ancient and modern epigrams. The wits, however, tells us that she never conquers in arms; but that she is invincible when she approaches unarmed, and clad in native beauty. They intended, I believe, to explode the affectation of masculine dress, manners, and diversions, which has of late greatly predominated in the circles of fashion. Women wear beaver hats and broad-cloth coats like men; women hunt *, and sometimes shoot, not arrows only, but powder and shot;

* Mævia Tuscum
Figit aprum—— Juv.

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there are female jockeys, female swearers, female gamesters, female drinkers, and why, in this improving age, should there not be female boxers? The Roman emperors encouraged female gladiators; and there are features in modern times not unlike those of the Romans under the emperors. It is worth remarking, that before a lady can be perfectly well qualified for archery, or any other manly exercise of the belligerent kind, she must prepare herself, like the ancient Amazons, by the painful amputation of a beautiful part, the absence of which, no masculine dress can compensate. Venus, Hebe, Cupid, and the Graces, swoon at the very idea of this amputation: but Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, make all hell resound with their plaudits, and grin horribly a ghastly smile of complacency at the hope of seeing their own deformity rendered less conspicuous by the crowd of their imitators. Their imitators have set a fashion of deformity; and all that is sweet in delicacy, and captivating in feminine grace, is hastening to follow it.

EVENING XXXVII.

ON FASTIDIOUS CONVERSATION.

THERE are persons so extremely refined and so delicately nice, that conversation, as it is commonly conducted, even among the sensible and well-bred, affords them but little pleasure; and as it appears among people in the middle rank, persons of plain sense and simple manners, actually puts them to ineffable torture.

This fastidiousness of conversation, where it is real, though valued as a high distinction, and the cause of pride in those who possess it, is a great misfortune. The perfection which it expects is not to be found in this sublunary state; and in pursuit of it, disappointment is constantly incurred. In the various intercourse of life, the company of all sorts of people must some-

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times be engaged in, and the majority may perhaps be inelegant, injudicious, and absurd; but still a really good understanding will make due allowance for defect of natural ability, defect of education, defect of good examples, and a hundred other defects, which must render conversation, as it is commonly met with in the world, very far from perfect. Good sense, united with good nature, and subdued to candour by experience, will find, amidst all these defects, something to afford pleasure, and something to contribute toward knowledge and improvement.

But this fastidiousness is oftener affected than real; and it is the manner of conversation which causes this disgust more frequently than the matter; for common sense is distributed without partiality to the majority of mankind in every rank of society. The artificial and refined modes of expressing it are indeed confined to those classes, whose opulence affords a superior education, and whose situation enables them to catch the transient graces of the prevailing fashion. But this refinement often weakens while it polishes. And the plain common sense of ordinary people, forms a solid, massy ore, which men of sense will prize, notwithstanding the dirt and extraneous matter with which it may be incumbered. But the over-refined and over-delicate cannot stoop to pick up the most precious jewel from a dunghill. The jewel must be set in gold, and presented in a costly casket, or they turn away from it with expressions of disdain. They will not take even gold and silver, if it is the common currency. They must traffic with pearls and diamonds, or with something else, if it is possible, still more exquisite.

But to the fastidious, not merely the vulgar, but those of liberal education and polite manners, are causes of squeamishness, if they are deficient in certain little graces, or modes of behaviour, which are no more

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to solid sense and goodness of heart, than the shell of the nut is to the kernel. "Mr. Such-an-one," says one of the over-delicate fraternity or sisterhood, "is a very learned and good man, to be sure. Much may be learnd from him. He is very entertaining to many, and not deficient in good nature and civility; but I know not how it is, I canont bear his conversation: it is so unlike the fashionable ton of Sir Versatile Varnish. It wants a *je ne sçai quoi*; that indescribable something which I believe is visible only to the purged eye of people of fashion. Sir Versatile Varnish is, to be sure, no scholar. He wrote us a letter the other day, with bad spelling and false grammar; but he has the art of pleasing in conversation. You never think it worth while to remember any thing he says: but you listen to him while he speaks, and you are charmed. Mr. —— is all that science and experience can contribute towards making a learned, a sensible, a wise, and a virtuous man; but he is awkward, and I cannot admit him to habits of familiarity. No; we must not visit him; but, however, we shall be at no loss for company, since Sir Versatile will be here very often, and Seignior — , and Monsieur ——, have promised to spend a month or two with us, to enliven our summer residence at the dull moat in Hertfordshire."

The contempt for good and sensible people who have not the indescribable something in conversation, becomes in time, a degree of inveterate hatred, which no human creature should harbour towards another. The proud treat them for want of the indescribable something, as if they were of another species; and look down upon them, much as the imperious manager of a plantation looks down upon the negroes under his whip; and with far less esteem than the fastidious gentleman and lady behold their pointers, their grey-hounds, their hunters, and their lap-dogs.

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Indeed this excessive delicacy originates more frequently in excessive self conceit, and excessive ill-nature, than from any excessive superiority of taste, or excessive discernment. The pride of the pretenders to it is flattered, and their malice gratified in finding something in every one, who has the misfortune to converse with them, wrong, defective, and disagreeable.

No virtue, no excellence moral or intellectual, no beauty, no innocence, can be secured from the malignant satire of persons who have once persuaded themselves that they have an indescribable something in their own persons, understandings, and manners, superior to the rest of mankind. Their whole delight and chief employment, as soon as their company is gone, is to ridicule and blame the behaviour and character of every one whom they had just caressed and entertained at their tables, with Judas-like smiles, and dissembled hospitality; which, it must be confessed, is an indescribable baseness.

The persons most liable to this folly, in both sexes, are smatterers in literature, would-be wits, and half-bred people of fashion. Not furnished with a sufficient stock of real merit to rise by their own elasticity, they have no means of viewing themselves on the elevation to which they aspire but by depressing all around them.

There is, indeed, so much affectation of superior taste, delicacy, and refinement; and it leads to such unmanly, unchristian, ungenerous treatment of others, that every man of solid understanding, who at the same time possesses a due sense of esteem for the human species, however unimproved in arts, must wish to discourage it, by denying it that respect and attention which its vanity claims as its due.

A microscopic eye for the discovery of defects and ugliness, is surely not desirable. If a power of vision so accurate and minute, is cultivated and acquired, let

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it be chiefly exerted in discovering the latent good qualities of our fellow-creatures; the integrity, the genius, and virtue of every kind which often lies concealed under a forbidding outside, and escapes the notice of these pretenders to extraordinary discernment.

It is indeed impossible but that superior understanding, improved by the advantages of a liberal education, and the company of the learned, the polished, and the experienced, should see defects in those who have not enjoyed these benefits. But their superiority of understanding will teach them to make allowances for unavoidable blemishes; and not to be implacably offended at little errors, deficiencies in forms, and neglect of decorum arising from ignorance or inattention; at natural failings or deformities, to which themselves or their families are liable, as well as others, or at any thing else where no offence is intended. Such a conduct will be no less politic than benevolent; for he who is offended at others, commonly offends them; and creates a busy and vigilant enmity which will usually find, at some time or other, opportunities for severe retaliation.

It is the good-natured advice of Horace, that instead of magnifying and aggravating the faults of those with whom we converse, we should extenuate them, by giving them gentle appellations, just as a father palliates the bodily deformities of his child, by calling them pretty oddities, and lovely little deviations from the common and ordinary standard of nature. It is certain that the unaffected suavity of disposition which bears with involuntary error, and employs itself to find out excellencies to counterbalance faults in characters, contributes more to personal happiness and the comforts of society, than the acutest sagacity, malignantly employed in detecting and describing little blemishes and trifling deviations from the fluctuating standard of fashion.

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EVENING XXXVII.

ON SOME OF THE OLD SERMON WRITERS.

It was the great misfortune of the old sermon writers, that they were obliged, by the fashion of their time, to preach an hour at least, and, on extraordinary occasions, much longer. Instead of compressing their subject, they were compelled by custom tediously to dilate it. They beat out their little gold, till it became a useless leaf; they spun their thread to such a degree of tenuity, that it became as subtile and as worthless as a cob-web.

The facetious Dr. Eachard, relates of an old preacher, that he took for his text, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." He observed that every word was significant and expressive. "To begin with the first word, *but*. This 'but,' says he, "is full of good wine; we will broach it, and taste a little—then proceed."

This instance, I imagine, is either feigned or exaggerated, to serve the purpose of the jocular writer; but it really gives no improper idea of the method which the old sermonizers pursued to eke out their sermons to their ordinary and most grievous dimensions.

The celebrated Dr. Donne thus begins a sermon* on the text, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

"This is no text for an hour-glass; if God would afford me Hezekiah's sign, *ut revertatur umbra*, that the shadow might go back upon the dial; or Joshua's sign, *ut sistat sol*, that the sun might stand still all the day, this were text enough to employ all the day, and all the days of our life. The lent which we begin now, is a full tithe of the year, but the hour which we begin now, is not a full tithe of this day, and therefore we should not grudge all that. But payment of tithes is

* Preached before the king, at Whitehall, February 16, 1620.

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become matter of controversy; and we, by our text, are directed to matters without controversy. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

Such is the exordium of the preacher, and without controversy it must have been a very comfortable hearing to a shivering congregation, in the season of Lent, on the sixteenth of February. The quaint nonsense of the exordium thus promising a long discourse, was at least an admonition to the congregation to summon all their patience. Well might Mr. Boyle write a consolatory Essay on long Sermons. He seems to allow an hour as a reasonable time; but the great object, in his days, seems to have been to gain the character of a fine preacher, not by quality, but by quantity of matter.

Let me be permitted to cite one or two other specimens from the same sermon of Dr. Donne. "Must I be damned?" says he, "the evidence of my salvation is my *credo*, not their *probo*; and if I must get to heaven by syllogism, my major is, *credo in Deum Patrem*, I believe in God the Father; for Pater, *major*, the Father is greater than all; and my *minor* shall be *credo in Deum Filium*, I believe in God the Son, *qui exivit de Patre*, he came from God; and my conclusion, which must proceed from major and minor, shall be *credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, I believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from Father and Son; and this syllogism brought me into the militant church at my baptism, and this will carry me into the triumphant, in my transmigration; for doctrine of salvation is matter without controversy."

This curious argumentation takes its rise from the words "without controversy" in the text, which probably mean no more than without doubt; but the taking of the words of the text, and descanting upon them separately, served the two-fold purpose of filling up the hour, and of obtaining the praise of sticking to the text,

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for the accomplishment of which the preacher would not stick at the most far-fetched absurdity of explication.

Dr. Donne was a man of great wit, sense, and learning. Nothing but the unfortunate fashion of dilating on words, merely to fill up the time, could have led him to preach in a quaint unnatural manner, very nearly approaching to the nonsensical.

I will do him the justice to cite a passage with which he concludes the sermon from which the above sentences are extracted.

"And because God dwells *in luce inaccessibili*, in a glorious light, which you cannot see here, glorify him in that in which you may see him, in that wherein he hath manifested himself, glorify him in his glorious gospel: employ your beams of glory, honour, favour, fortune, in transmitting the same glory to your children, as you received it from your fathers, for in this consists the mystery of godliness, which is faith with a pure conscience." *O si sic omnia!*

But he begins his next sermon with a passage, which again seems to be a demand from the pulpit, for patience. The text is, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Alluding to the hour-glass which stood by his side, he says, "If I had a secular glass, a glass that would run an age, if the two hemispheres of the world were composed in the form of such a glass, and all the world calcined and burnt to ashes, and all the ashes and sands and atoms of the world put into that glass, it would not be enough to tell the godly man, what his treasure, and the object of his heart is."

He proceeds thus a little lower: "Our text stands as that proverbial, that hieroglyphical Pythagoras's Y; that hath first a stalk, a stem to fix itself, and then spreads into two beams. The stem, the stalk of this

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letter, this Y in the first word of the text, is that particle of argumentation, for . . . . and then opens this symbolical, this cabalistical letter, this Y, into two horns, two beams, two branches; one broader, but on the left hand, denoting the treasures of the world; the other narrower, but on the right hand, denoting treasure laid up for the world to come. Be sure you turn the right way."—Here we see the hammer of the goldbeater, working hard on the anvil, to produce a film.

It must be owned, however, that many of these old writers abound with ideas, which, though they violate decorum and are greatly strained, yet afford much entertainment to a curious reader; entertainment resulting not only from their oddity, but their ingenuity. One might make a considerable collection from them of witty remarks, approaching to *bon mots*. The modern writer, though infinitely more elegant and decorous, is often insipid on comparison. The old writers laboured hard to produce matter from their own brain, which, though often flimsy as Arachne's web, had the merit of ingenious originality. They often snatched a grace, by venturing to say daring things; things that advanced on the very brink of impropriety; but the modern is restrained and cooled by caution, or timidity. The refined congregations of the present day would not tolerate such adventurous thoughts, such hazardous expressions, such approaches to downright burlesque and nonsense. The awe of an audience checks the preacher, like tying the wings of an eagle.

Whoever wishes to entertain himself with the quaintness of the old sermon writers will find a fund of such entertainment, as he seeks, in the sermons of Bishop Andrews, Barten Halliday, Gataker, Donne, Saunderson, South, and many others of the last century. At the same time, he will discover in them a rich mine of fine sense often well expressed; and a vein of piety,

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simplicity, and godly sincerity, which no awkwardness of manner and expression can ever depreciate.

But to the honour of the present race of divines, it must be acknowledged, that they greatly excel their predecessors in preserving the decorum and dignity of the pulpit. They exhibit a gravity and modesty which peculiarly becomes the chaste matron, Religion. Their decent mode of preaching, raises a respectful attention to their doctrine, far more favourable to the advancement of religion, than learning sullied with pedantry, exhortation vulgarized by low wit, argument perplexed by scholastic subtilty, exposition spoiled by quaintness, and pious declamation rendered ludicrous by humour and ill-placed pleasantry.

EVENING XXXIX.

ON THE INCONSISTENCES OF AVARICE, AND ON PETTY AVARICE.

From a strange inconsistency in the human mind, it sometimes happens that men who are sufficiently generous and bountiful on great occasions, disgrace and distress themselves by a parsimony in such trifles as are utterly unworthy of their care. This mean part of the character, the overvaluing of trifles, has not escaped that accurate observer of the living world, Theophrastus. He has described the quality which forms it, under the denomination of micrologia, or that species of avarice which estimates little things greatly above their real value; or which notices minute articles which are beneath its regard.

He enumerates several instances of this petty niggardliness, more applicable indeed to his own times than to ours, but yet such as modern manners too often resemble. Among many other specimens of this narrowness, he mentions that his Micrologus, when at a public feast, or perhaps at a dinner at his own house,

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instead of being engaged by the conversation, attends solely to reckoning how many glasses each of the guests has drunk, and computing arithmetically how many bottles are on the whole exhausted.

The ancient satirists and comic writers* are very severe and facetious on this sordid disposition. Plautus, describing a petty miser, for so I shall term the man of this character, gives us to understand, that when his nails have been cut by the operator, whom the moderns would call a chiropodist, he carefully wraps up the parings, and hugging himself with the consciousness of his treasure, pockets the precious deposit, and walks off with an air of perfect self-complacency. When he washes his hands, he laments with a sigh, that so much water must be thrown away. If he sees a little smoke issuing from his chimney, he grieves, as if his house were on fire; and cannot help thinking that it is a pity so much good smoke should be lost in the air, which would have served to smoke the flitch of bacon, if it had happily been confined within doors. By these strokes of hyperbole, the poet means to hint that such men cannot bear to part with any thing, not the parings, even of their nails. The character has always afforded a fine topic for comedy and farce; but I am not sure that it ought not to be viewed with pity rather than derision, as it appears to resemble insanity.

Yet some men of enlightened minds and singular liberality of ideas, have exhibited in their conduct,

* Casaubon, in his notes to the chapter on the Micrologia in Theophrastus, has collected a number of curious appellations which the Greek writers give to the petty miser. They are similar to those of the English skin-flint, split-farthing, nip-cheese, pinch-penny, close-fist, hold-fast, gripe; from which we may conclude, that this irrational character was always common, and always the subject of comic ridicule. As to ridicule, the miser always said in his heart,

Populus me sibilat—at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi—simul ac nummos contemplor in arca. HOR.

Casaubon refers to this passage in Plautus, whence the ideas in the subsequent description are taken.

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strange instances of petty parsimony. Paper is an article, which, considering its utility and beauty, may be deemed cheap; yet some who were able to make the best use of it, by filling it with good sense, wit, poetry, and eloquence, have been niggards of it in the extreme.

That accurate observer, Swift, gave Pope the epithet of paper-saving; which he certainly deserved, for I have seen, in the British Musæum some of his manuscripts written on the covers of letters, so closely, as almost to confound the lines of the poet with the superscription.

Chapelain, a polite and famous scholar of France, was expected, from his connection with Voiture and Balzac, to leave behind him many letters of great elegance. But they were found on examination, unworthy of the public eye; and it was assigned as a reason, that Chapelain being of the paper-saving class, studied nothing in writing his letters, but to make them as short as possible, that he might save a bit of paper. It is a wonder that these parsimonious scribes did not omit dots and tittles to save ink.

Petty parsimony is very common in the articles of stationary. Many write in so small a character, and so closely, to spare paper, that it is impossible to decipher their manuscripts. Many dilute their ink till it is thin and pale as water, and soon becomes yellow as saffron, or vanishes and leaves not a trace behind. Many wear their pens to stumps as little fit for writing as a skewer. Many grudge wax enough to secure their letter from opening in its passage by the post from London to Islington, and treasure up a wafer with as much care as a guinea. All these, at the same time, shall be rich enough to keep equipages, and villas, and to indulge in every delight of expensive luxury.

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Some there are who had rather not hear from their best friends and nearest relations, than pay the postage of a letter; who are perpetually engaged in broils with carriers, stage coachmen, hackney coachmen, watermen, and porters, about overcharges of a penny or two-pence, though the time they spend, and the uneasiness they feel in the dispute, are such, as pounds could not compensate; and after all, the sum in debate is of no more consequence to them than the dust on their shoes, or the powder in their perukes. Add to which, that they usually have the worst of it in the result; their foolish parsimony being such, as to lead them to refuse payment when it is due, and can be legally exacted.

The petty miser is sure to pick a personal quarrel with the tax-gatherer; and treats all persons who come with a legal demand for money due to others, as if they came to make unjustifiable claims upon him for their own advantage. He goes to his country house at Hackney, for the benefit of the air, but has stopped up more than half the windows in it, out of spite to the minister. He found that the stoppage of two windows more would save a crown a year; and therefore, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his wife and daughter, he plastered up the bow-window, and one of the side sashes in the drawing-room.

If the petty miser goes on a party of pleasure, or a rural excursion, he spoils all the comfort of it by suffering his temper to be ruffled by quarrels with post-chaise boys, waiters, boot-catchers, or turnpike-men, about pence and half-pence. Though he has spent many pounds in the excursion, he comes home without having received the pleasure he pursued; because he lost the power of being pleased, in losing his temper in controversies for sums amounting, perhaps, in the whole, to half-a-crown.

The petty miser is extremely penurious in all the

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articles of dress. He will not lay aside a coat, or a hat, till they are quite worn out, though the very boys laugh at his ludicrous appearance, as he passes along the streets. In a public mourning, he brings out a quondam black coat, which was new at the death of queen Anne, and has now undergone a curious change of colour, like the leaves in autumn; and from a raven-grey, is become a bottle-green. His servants, in the mean time, are clad in as good liveries as those of other people.

If he is caught in a shower, in returning from the Bank, where he has received a large dividend, he will not call a coach, or stop at a coffee-house, but stands an hour or two under a gateway, and at last trudges home in the rain, with such a cold and sore throat, and a hat so much injured, that the emulsions and reparations cost more than the coach would have amounted to, if it had been hired for the whole day; but he looks with delight at the shilling he saved, and triumphs in the wisdom of his economy.

If he gives a pittance, which is but rare, to an importunate petitioner, or to persons who collect for a charity, or for the lecturer of the parish, he throws it down with so ill a grace, and with so many murmurs at the multitude of taxes and the hardness of the times, that the receivers feel themselves hurt at the gift, and would gladly go without the money to escape the unpleasant rencounter. At the same time he subscribes liberally to the relief of debtors confined for small debts, and to the Asylum.

In the months of January and February, he sits shivering by a fire, which you might cover with your hand; though he is racked with a rheumatism, which a warm room would relieve, and though, in every other apartment in his house, the fires are as large as those who sit by them chuse to make them. He does not

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begin fires till the first of November, and ends them on the last day of March; because it was the good old custom of his family, and good old customs should never be laid aside. Nobody chuses to come near him at these cold periods, and his fingers and feet swell with chilblains; but he does not mind that, as he is keeping up a good old custom.

When he is ill, instead of seeking the advice of an apothecary or physician, he prescribes for himself from Buchan's Domestic Medicine, or an old family receipt-book of his grandmother's, and buys a penny-worth of drugs at the shop, which he administers to himself, in consequence of which he has brought on disorders which nearly cost him his life, and, at the same time, large sums in daily and long-repeated fees to the Doctor. But notwithstanding this, he is an annual contributor to more than one dispensary, established for supporting the poor with medicine and advice gratuitously.

I believe he is of the same species as the miser, Hopkins, celebrated by Mr. Pope; for, though he is always very saving of candles-ends during his life, he is attended with numerous torches at his funeral, being sumptuously buried by the heir, who is so much benefitted by his parsimonious life.

The inconsistent miser, who places too high a value on trifles, and yet is as free as others in some parts of his expences, is a curious, but no uncommon, phenomenon. It is caused by want of reasoning, by thoughtlessness of a peculiar kind, by early habits of meanness acquired before the fortune was made, and at a time when little things were really important. This early association is not easily corrected in old age, or even in manhood; and he, to whom a pair of shoes or a coat were things of prime consequence, when he was an apprentice, a clerk, or a porter, can scarcely help

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thinking them equally so, when his industry and virtue hath clothed him in scarlet, put a gold chain round his neck, and seated him in the coach of the lord mayor.

I should be gratified, if any of these hints might correct the error, which often poisons the sweets of good fortune, and renders men of singular integrity, industry, fidelity, and even partial generosity, the objects of harted to those whom their petty avarice pinches, and of supreme contempt to the common observer.

EVENING XL.

ON ARTFUL, PROSTITUTED, AND EXCESSIVE PRAISE.

The prostitution of praise, for venal purposes, is a species of deception which deserves to be ranked among the frauds of the vilest depredator on property. It robs virtue of the best among its sublunary rewards, and bestows it on crafty villany, on plausible ignorance, on hypocritical pretence; on every character, however idle, useless, and worthless, which is at the same time subtle enough to wear a mask to save appearances, and can join, with an air of gravity, in the interested collusion. I do not at present comprehend flattery under the prostitution of praise of which I am speaking; but merely that practice of extolling men beyond measure, to serve their interest, which is known by the cant name of puffing; a name good enough indeed for the thing signified: but a name which implies something as far beneath real praise, as Dr. Rock, of notorious memory, was inferior to that honour of human nature, Dr. Heberden.

When a parent dwells with rapture on the genius and improvements of a lubberly lad, and a lover expatiates with ecstasy on beauties in his mistress which she does not possess, few can be deceived; because the world is sagacious enough to discover, and good-natured enough to make allowances for, the blind partiality of immoderate affection.

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But honest affection, and blind and mistaken partiality have no concern in the prostitution of praise, which I at present contemplate. This originates in low cunning, and is compatible with sovereign contempt for the very object which it extolls to the skies.

The artful puffer is a philosopher of the Chesterfieldian school. His great object is to make the world his bubble. He is perfectly acquainted with the best methods of sporting the puff-selfish, and can throw in even censure itself in such an adroit manner, as to contribute ultimately to his praise. He has a thousand arts in conversation, acquired by studying the great founder of the sect, which tend to set off his paltry beads and French paste, and make them mistaken for real pearls, and diamonds of the first water. But I intend only to view him at present as the puffer of others, of his relations, friends, patrons, and of all others by whom some selfish purpose is to be accomplished, his interest advanced, his vanity tickled, or his pride, either personal or of family, indulged.

The puffer, we will suppose, has a cousin, or a brother, or a common acquaintance, who, stimulated by the hope of gain or preferment, has produced an abortive poem, or a ricketty treatise in prose. The finest type and paper has been used; plates inserted by the most eminent artists; copies sent free of carriage, and all bound and lettered in the manner of Baumgarten, to many great people, famous critics, eminent literati; yet all in vain. The ill-formed bantling cannot stand upon its legs. Puffing is as necessary, as the bellows of the Humane Society, to resuscitate the expiring corpse. To work, therefore, the puffing professor goes, with all the zeal of an operator who expects to receive the silver medal.

"Have you seen," he asks in all companies to which he can gain access, "have you seen the excellent Poem,

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or Dissertation, which has such a run, and which some attribute to Mr. A. or Dr. B.?—Indeed, Sir, it is a fine performance. The language so elegant, the ideas so new;—the—the—in short, buy it. It will be a standard book. But I must not leave you under the mistake of its being the production of Mr. A. or Dr. B.: it is, to let you into a great secret, it is the work of my cousin; as promising a young man, I suppose, as any in the three kingdoms. O, my good Sir, it is astonishing what parts he possesses. He wrote this excellent book off-hand—mere play to him. He is idle—the dog is idle—a fault of all great geniuses—but then he has no occasion for plodding. Depend upon it, he will make a great figure; and be soon at the head of his profession in rank, as he is in merit, and has been some time, notwithstanding his youth."

If a friend of his brings out a play, more soporific than the dullest sermon, he declares that the house overflowed, and that it was received with repeated bursts of applause; though the few that were there, were admitted by orders; and every one of them caught sore throats by the chill blasts that blew through the empty rows of the pit, boxes, and gallery.

He goes to a charity sermon at a crowded chapel, where his nephew holds forth, in consequence of his suggesting that a young man should put himself forward in the world, or else he will be neglected and starve. The poor nephew has the misfortune to have an impediment in his speech, forces what little he can articulate through the nasal orifices, and is obliged to that great professor of theology, Dr. Trusler, for all his divinity. It is true, the congregation grumble, and very few shillings jingle in the churchwardens' plate at the door; but the puffing professor intends that his nephew shall stand for a neighbouring lectorship then vacant, and therefore he sallies forth, and informs all that he can

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take the liberty of speaking to in the parish, that he really was never better entertained in his whole life, than he was with the discourse of a mighty pretty young man, who preached a charity sermon at Fashion-street chapel this morning. There was in it all the perspicuity of Tillotson, and all the solidity of Clarke, united with the florid elegance of Seed, the pathos of Sterne, and the copious fluency of Blair. "On my word, Sir, he was great indeed. Nothing theatrical neither in his manner. No, no; nothing but the plain, dignified simplicity, which is the best garb of religion. A most excellent preacher! It is not the lot of every one to wear a mitre; but it is more glorious to deserve it. A very flattering circumstance to myself it is, that I have the honour to call this most promising young divine my near relation."

He has another friend or relation a painter. "Have you been to the Exhibition?" O yes. "Then, I hope you took due notice of the best picture in the room, Mr. Le Daub's portrait of that most excellent preacher, my nephew, the prebendary, that preached the famous sermon, that made so much noise, some years back, at Fashion-street chapel. Indeed you could not but be struck with it. The original is as fine a figure, I suppose, as ever existed, and the picture has done it justice indeed; ample justice; for it breathes, it speaks —it is really too much—art has outstripped nature. The resemblance is actually more like nature than the living original; all life, fire, and energy. Poor Sir Joshua! it was unlucky for you that Le Daub's picture was hung up so near your feeble attempts. Le Daub, I suppose, bids fair to be the greatest portrait painter this country ever beheld. But he has too much business. People of fashion will be painted by nobody else now."

His friends and kinsfolk in the professions of medi-

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cine and law are all extolled in similar strains of hyperbolical eulogy. And as he pronounces his panegyrics, with an air of confidence, apparently arising from superior judgment, he misleads great numbers, and has actually raised to some degree of eminence a tribe of poor creatures, who without puffing, would long ago have sunk in penury and oblivion.

But his puffing exertions are most ardently and laboriously displayed in the field of politics. He is not without hope of raising himself to some valuable post, when the party whom he puffs, shall come into power.

"Was you at the House last night?" No; I went to see the play that you recommended. "Well, you were, I have no doubt, admirably entertained; but yet, I wish you had been in the House. O, Sir, I suppose there never was such a display of brilliancy since the world issued out of chaos. My friend Mr. —— was great indeed—astonishingly great—great beyond expression, beyond conception. No eloquence but his own can do justice to his stupendous powers. I look upon it, we have the three greatest luminaries now in the House, that the world ever saw, and all on one side; they have been called, indeed, through lack of better comparisons, the Demosthenes, the Cicero, and the Pericles of the age. But, my dear Sir, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Pericles, were not fit to hold a candle to Mr. ——, or Mr. ——, or my Lord ——. They were children and fools to them. I look upon it, eloquence in the hands of this glorious triumvirate, has reached the acmé of perfection. Upon my soul, nature and art are so combined in them, have wrought in them so finished a work, that they can go no farther; they have exhausted all their powers, and must rest and sleep for ages, before they can give birth to productions resembling in the remotest degree, these

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great luminaries. They thunder, they lighten, they shake the whole nation like an earthquake, by their stupendous oratory. It was said of Plato, that if the gods were to converse with mortals, they would adopt his language. It might be more truly said of Mr.——. O Chatham, Chatham, thou never hadst an idea of eloquence. If the luminaries could but come into power, how would the nation flourish! Such powers—are equal to the government of the universe; fit to wield the real thunder and lightning above; fit to rule the privy council of heaven, or rather to depose and usurp its dominion. The earth is unworthy of such luminaries. The generality want power of vision to bear their brilliancy. Therefore these men are not in office:—but, like roses, blush unseen, and waste their fragrance in the desert air."

But as the puffer blows a prosperous gale on those whom he wishes to serve, however undeserving; so he breathes a foul pestilential blast on the fairest characters, and the richest desert, which are rising to fame and fortune without being likely to promote his interest, his vanity, his party, and his profession.

He studies the arts of detraction with as much attention as the arts of unmerited praise.

"Who is that scribbler whom you mention?" he cries, when he hears another praising a man of merit; "I really never heard his name before. Has he written any thing? Bless me, I make a point of seeing every thing of any repute; but I never was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. —— (I beg your pardon; I forget the person's name you mentioned)—Mr. ——'s Works. But I will inquire—I dare say I can get them in quires at the cheese-monger's."

"Such an one is a good preacher;" Says somebody. I really cannot speak to that point. I, for my part, was very drowsy; and, egad! all the people in the pew

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where I sat, who were decidedly the most intelligent in the church, were asleep, except my friend Professor ——, who must be acknowledged to be a good judge, and he was stuffing his pudding sleeves into his mouth to prevent a fit of laughter."

A charming picture that of Sir Joshua's—La! la! The Knight grows old—breaks apace—indeed I never saw any thing to admire in his fugacious colours."

Praise the physician who has saved your life, or the judge who has done you justice, and he lifts up his brows and exclaims: "Dr. H. is an old woman. Judge ——, another; Lord —— does not understand law—but may be a mighty good man for aught I know."

As to statesmen and senatorial orators, they are all fools and knaves, but those of the party by whom he hopes to be rewarded for puffing and paragraphing, with something more solid than empty praise.

In dispensing both censure and applause, he has no regard to truth, and the conviction of his own mind; but has arrived at such depravity as to be able to invent and propagate fictitious stories to confirm his sentences of men and their conduct, whether favourable or unfavourable. It is from such men as he that paragraphs in the public prints appear blackening or brightening individuals, for interested or malicious purposes, without the least attention to delicacy, justice, or veracity. The evil has indeed been carried to such lengths as to have almost become its own remedy; for the suspicions of mankind are awakened by reiterated deception, and credulity and malice, from having been often and ridiculously duped, begin to learn distrust and candour.

But the misfortune is, that just and merited praise often loses all its effect by being confounded with the hyperbolical and false encomiums of the puffer; and that modesty and truth, unassuming, unpretending,

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and rather diffident from the delicacy attending them, are either left unnoticed, or robbed of all their honours by the bold and interested detractor. The cultivation of solid worth is thus discouraged; and a study of the mean arts of securing the rewards of virtue without possessing its intrinsic value, promoted. Private happiness is thus diminished among those who deserve to enjoy it unmolested; and the public welfare injured by discouraging virtuous and laborious exertion. Puffers ought therefore to be exposed, to be avoided as nuisances to society, and viewed with as much suspicion, as sharpers, swindlers, gamesters, and the whole fraternity of unprincipled adventurers.

Immoderate praise is, indeed, become very suspicious; and a man of sense is as much upon his guard against its effect on his mind, as against the advertisements of quack-doctors, and the particulars of auctioneers. He argues that there must be something ugly that requires so much gilding to cover it; something rotten, or blemished, where the thing recommended cannot be obtruded on notice without a profusion of paint and varnish.

It is diverting to consider how highly every little excellence is praised in the present age, by those who are interested in forcing it into celebrity. As the orator of the hammer denominates a cit's country-box, a villa and a mansion; a cistern, a reservoir; a horse-pond, a canal; a ditch, a trout-stream; a grass-plot, ten feet by twelve, a paddock: so a little sprig of divinity is equalled, in the praises of the puffer, to a Tillotson; a young practitioner, that has hardly walked the hospital, to a Boerhaave; a pragmatical pleader, as soon as he has thrown a tie-wig over his toupee, to a Coke or a Littleton; a petty catgut-scraper, to an Apollo; a canvass-spoiler, to an Apelles; a rhymer, to a Pope; a builder of a messuage, two rooms on a floor,

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to a Wren. Every hill is brought low by him, and every valley exalted.

Such eulogies are lavished on mediocrity, or even demerit, as were never given, in their lifetime at least, to Lord Chancellor Bacon, to Sir Isaac Newton, to Shakespeare, to Milton, to Handel, all of whom Fame has justly placed in the most honourable niches of her temple. It seems to be an adopted maxim in the present age, that if glory come not till after death, it comes too late. And the goddess Fame seems to attend to it judiciously; for as she gives so much during the lives of her votaries, she withholds all memory of most of them immediately on their decease.

Upon the whole, it may be said with truth, that praise, from its prostitution, is in many cases become satire, and satire an honour; and that censure or neglect is now, in a variety of instances, creditable; for it proves that the man to whom it is shewn, has left his merit to stand or fall, as it might be able of itself; and in the honesty of an upright and ingenuous spirit, has scorned to use sinister and collusive arts to repel the weapons of envy and malice.

EVENING XLI.

ON ENDEAVOURS TO DERIVE IMPORTANCE BY AFFECTED HASTE AND PRETENDED AVOCATIONS.

Among the many modes of assuming consequence, adopted by men of little sense and great vanity, is that of being always in a hurry.

Sir Hurricane Bustleton having inherited a very good fortune, and being trained to no profession, has less business on his hands than most people. But his ambition is to be thought a man of business, and his great pride is in what he terms, not without many complaints, his multiplicity of avocations.

If you call upon him, the servant is sure to deny him

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the first time, and to tell you that he cannot possibly be spoken with, unless you come before ten o'clock in the morning. You go at the time appointed. The servant carries up your name, and you are desired to wait in the parlour till Sir Hurry can leave a gentleman who is now with him on particular business. You wait at least an hour, when Sir Hurry comes running down stairs, rushing into the room, and banging the door, as if he were pursued by a bailiff. His hat, cane, and both his gloves, are in one hand; while with two fingers of the other, he just touches your palm, and then draws his watch from his fob, and after applying it to his ear with seeming alarm, accosts you in the following manner, without giving you an opportunity to answer him one syllable, or to cause a moment's interruption:—

"Bless me, I did not think it was so late. I beg a thousand pardons; but I have a particular engagement at eleven. I know you will excuse me. But pray how does Mrs. Patience do? and all the little ones? John—bring my great-coat."

Then, having drawn out a little memorandum-book, he hums over, in an interrupted soliloquy—Sir Richard, at twelve—Lord Robert, at one—his Grace, at two—confound these engagements—O, Mr. Patience, will you dine with me at seven to-day? I shall then be able to speak to you; I hope so at least—unless a letter of great consequence should arrive by the post. If it should, you will have the candour to excuse my absence. My Lady will do the honours."—Then looking at his watch again, and stammering, "good morning," he flies off like an arrow from a bow, and shuts the door with vehemence, which makes all Portman-square re-echo.

If you take the pains to follow him, you find him lounging half an hour at the print-seller's window, or

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at the shew-glass of a buckle-shop, or cheapening a tooth-pick, or parading up and down Bond-street, till he is tired, and then resting himself in a coffee-house; till he sallies forth to pay a few morning calls in the afternoon to people as idly busy as himself; and thus, with perhaps a gallop in Rotten-row, gets rid of the tedious hours which intervene between the hour of rising and the hour of dinner.

Mr. Patience, however, having had the honour of invitation to dine with Sir Hurry, and seeing very little likelihood of being able to speak at present, upon the real business which he came up from York about, attends punctually at seven. Sir Hurricane is not yet come home. But in about a quarter of an hour his arrival is announced with such a rap, as realizes the fictitious story of Salmoneus's thunder. In he runs, puffing, blowing, and wiping his face; and with a thousand interruptions, makes his apologies, declaring, that he came away now before the business that detained him was brought to a conclusion. The dinner is now brought in, quite spoiled either by over-doing, or by being kept till it is cold. "It cannot be helped, my dear. Mr. Patience will, I am sure, excuse it, as he knows every thing must give way to business. Egad! I am glad I thought of it. Has Leasum been here? I must write a line to him before I sit down. Do, pray Mr. Patience, begin.—I will be with you in a moment." Away he goes to a corner of the room, employs three or four footmen to bring paper, pen, ink, letter-case, sealing-wax, and wax-taper; curses the pen, curses the ink, tears the paper, flings it into the fire, then returns to dinner, vowing and protesting that he will get rid of this multiplicity of avocations which thus breaks in upon his convivial pleasures. After swallowing the wing of a chicken, and two or three glasses of Madeira, he starts like one frightened in a dream, and striking his

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forehead with his palm, deplores the treachery of his memory; for he recollects too late, that he was to have dined with the Committee to-day. But it does not signify; if he gets there by nine o'clock, he shall be in time to do business, which is the main thing. At last, really weary with his own affected activity, he sits down and finishes his repast, but not without several momentary fits of absence, many nods, shrugs, and broken soliloquies, significant of the multitude and profundity of the cogitations.

Poor Patience diverts himself with the Baronets's absurdity; but eats his dinner, and enjoys the conversation of my Lady and the children, though he has not a hope of opening upon the business he came upon, as Sir Hurricane is to go out at nine, and he himself is obliged to set out in one of the night stages for Yorkshire. He takes his leave, after having agreed with Sir Hurry to transact the negociation by letter.

Sir Hurry receives a long epistle from him in a few days, and immediately sits down and writes the following answer, in a hand scarcely legible through extreme precipitation:

"DEAR SIR,

"Your's is just come to hand. It requires, I see, much consideration. But I cannot command a moment's leisure. Hope to be able in a few months. Jaded to death. A dozen letters to write by this night's post; besides a multiplicity of avocations in the evening. Excuse haste and blots. My servant waits to fold this letter. Hope he will direct it right. Your's, &c. in haste.

"HURRICANE BUSTLETON."

The next day, being Sunday, he fixes upon for his journey to Tunbridge-Wells, and thence to Brighton, on the Sunday following. His own horses cannot run fast enough without injury. They are therefore sent

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down at leisure the day before; and four hacks are put to the coach, which is laden before, behind, at top and at bottom. "Sirrahs," he exclaims to the post-boys, "drive as fast as possible, especially through all the towns. I cannot bear to creep, like a snail, through a nasty town. Drive, I say, as if the devil was in you; or I shall remember you, at the end of the stage, in a manner you will not like." At the same time, he holds up a yellow coin, which never fails to operate like a spur of the best construction. Away the horses fly, as if they had wings; but luckily, they have not; luckily, I say, for if they had, they could not gloriously bespatter the coach from bottom to top with the mud of Kent-street, and the dirt of Lewisham and Bromley. The dogs bark; children and nurses squall; all the doors and windows are crowded with old maids and young maids; the hostlers at the inns admire, and hollo to the three footmen who come galloping after, Who is it? who is it? Sir Hurricane, Sir Hurricane, they reply; and the whole town resounds the name of Sir Hurricane, the great Baronet, going to Tunbridge. Two or three horses fall victims; but the Baronet arrives, fortunately, in time to have his hair dressed before he dines tête-à-tête with his Lady, at a little lodging in a vamped cottage on Mount-Misery.

Sir Hurricane Bustleton is so rapid in his progress, that it would tire even Pegasus himself to keep pace with him. I shall therefore take leave of him at Mount-misery, with reminding him, that true dignity is never in a hurry; and assuring him, that the hurry of importance so much affected in travelling, and all the other motions by those who have really nothing important to do, increases their insignificance in the eyes of men of sense, by shewing how contemptible a shift they are driven to, merely to exhibit the external appearance of that consequence, which they do not

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possess, and cannot acquire by riches and titles, unaccompanied with personal merit.

EVENING XLII.

ON A LATIN POEM ON THE ART OF NURSING.

PHYSICIANS have often written didactic poems on various subjects connected with the business of their faculty. Armstrong's poem on Health, is one of the best I have seen; but the *Syphilis* of Fracastorius, and the *Pædotrophia* of Sammarthanus, are not without distinguished beauty.

Though Sammarthanus's *Pædotrophia*, or, Art of Nursing, is in Latin; yet the poet descends to such minute precepts as really concern the nurses and gossips, who, unless they are as expert in the Latin as in the vulgar tongue, will not be the better for them.

The following passage, in which the poet recommends to mothers the suckling of their own infants, is exquisitely beautiful:

Ipsæ etiam Alpinis villosæ in cautibus ursæ,
Ipsæ etiam tigres, et quicquid ubique ferarum est,
Debita servandis concedunt ubera natis;
Tu, quam miti animo natura benigna creavit,
Exuperes feritate feras? nec te tua tangant
Pignora, nec querulos puerili e gutture planctus;
Nec lacrymas misereris opemque injusta recuses,
Quam præstare tuum est, quæ te pendebit ab unâ?
Cujus onus teneris hærebit dulce lacertis
Infelix puer, et molli se pectore sternet?
Dulcia quis primi captabit gaudia risus,
Et primas voces, et blæsæ murmura linguæ,
Tuné fruenda alii potes ista relinquere, demens,
Tantique esse putas teretis servare papillæ,
Integrum decus et juvenilem in pectore florem?
Tu, cui concedunt meliorem numina mentem,
Sume ultro quodcunque operæ, quodcunque laboris,
Ut serves opus ipsa tuum et pia munera præstes.

"The very bears on the Alpine rocks, the very tigers themselves, and the fiercest wild beasts on the face of the earth, give suck to their young ones. Will

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you then, whom nature has kindly formed with tender sympathy, exceed the brutes in cruelty? And will you not suffer the little pledges of your own loves to touch you, and will you not pity the moans and tears of the poor infants? And will you refuse your aid which it is your duty to afford, and which depends upon you alone? In whose arms shall the sweet burden be laid; on whose soft bosom shall the poor child recline? Who first shall taste the delight of the first smiles, listen to the first syllables, and the babbling of its lisping tongue? Ah, foolish woman! will you let another enjoy all this pleasure? Is it worth while to lose so much for the sake of preserving beauty and delicacy of shape?

"I exhort you, who, by the blessing of heaven, have better principles, to take upon you whatever trouble and fatigue may attend this maternal duty, that you may preserve your own work, and perform the pious office of a good mother."

I must leave this passage to be dilated on by husbands who wish to inculcate the salutary doctrine which they contain. The verses gave me a high opinion of the taste and sensibility of their writer; and it would be a happy circumstance for babes and sucklings if they could be as persuasive as they are pleasing.

I will add another passage, excellent both for its advice and composition, on giving the child due exercise:

Nec minus inde agita, sublataque mollibus ulnis
Interdum exerce leni corpuscula motu,
Multa hilari simul ore jocans: neque clausa reconde
Usque domi in latebris, sed apertas defer in auras,
Dum nullæ sudo nebulæ, dum purior æther,
Et nitidum leves ludunt per innane Favoni;
Ut cœlo et variâ gavisus imagine rerum
Assuescat luci puer, Authoremque potentem
Quâ potis, admirans primis agnoscat ab annis.

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"Exercise their little bodies with a gentle motion, talking to them at the same time cheerfully. Neither keep them within doors always, but carry them into the open air, while the sky is serene, while the air is clear, and the zephyrs play around; that the little one, rejoicing at the sight of heaven and the various objects around him, may be accustomed to the light of day, and, struck with admiration, learn even from his infancy to venerate, in some degree, the Almighty Maker."

Monsieur de St. Marthe, or Sammarthanus, as he is classically called, is a poet of the first class among the imitators of ancient elegance. He was born in 1586, and died in 1623.

Like the poets of his time, he has furnished a volume divided into Lyrics, Elegies, Sylvæ, Epigrammata, et Cantica, or Sacred Poems. The Pædotrophia is the best of his works; but he who has a taste for modern Latin poetry, will find much entertainment in every part of his volume.

Subjoined to the poems are three books of Elogia in prose, which contain many entertaining biographical anecdotes of French literati, in a classical style, and a diction, that though it may perhaps be thought too florid, is yet engaging, because it is animated.

EVENING XLIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF LATIN, TO UNDERSTAND WITH ACCURACY MANY ENGLISH WORDS, ESPECIALLY IN OUR OLD WRITERS.

I HAVE often maintained the necessity of understanding Latin and Greek in order to understand English completely: and I have heard the doctrine controverted, and attributed to a pedantical desire of enhancing the value of the learned languages.

The authors of the last century afford many proofs of this necessity. I have accidentally noticed the fol-

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lowing passages in the works of Bishop Taylor, and they appear to me to be decisive.

The Bishop says, in his "Ductor Dubitantium," "The Arabian physicians endeavour to elevate and lessen the miraculous conception."

A mere English reader will either not understand this at all, or understand it in such a manner as to render it contradictory and nonsensical. He will understand 'elevate' in its present signification, to raise or exalt: whereas the author means quite the contrary, to depress and to lower. The Bishop had the Latin *elevare* in his mind, which signifies to diminish, detract from, or extenuate. In some editions the word is altered by somebody who did not understand it, and instead of "elevate" is printed "alleviate."*

In the same page he says, "St. John was listened to by king and people, by doctors and by idiots, by Pharisees and Sadducees."

A mere English reader will not fail to understand fools by idiots, and will conclude that the Bishop intended to say that St. John was attended by wise men and fools. But as the Bishop means by the context to honour St. John, it is impossible to conceive that he would say, as a compliment to him, that he was listened to by idiots in the synonymous sense with fools. The truth is, that the Bishop had the Greek "Idiotai" in view, and only meant that St. John was listened to by all ranks and conditions, by the learned and the unlearned; for idiotai signifies the common people, the vulgar herd, as distinguished from the learned, or people of condition.

A great multitude of instances might be produced from the same learned author; but these happened to

* Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Politie, uses the same word in the same sense—"There are that elevate too much the ordinarie, &c. means." Book v. sect. 59.

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occur while I was reading his admirable little treatise inserted in the fourth chapter and first book of the Ductor Dubitantium, entitled, "An Instance of Moral Demonstration, or a Conjugation of Probabilities, proving that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God." I advise my reader attentively to consider that excellent piece, not only as a most ingenious composition, but as exhibiting, in a striking point, many unanswerable arguments in favour of Christianity.

I beg leave to present him, as an inducement, with the following specimen, on the internal evidence of the divinity of the religion of Jesus Christ.

"It is a doctrine perfective of human nature, that teaches us to love God, and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; it propines to us the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the world; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be devils; it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of devils, in murders and revenges, malice, and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures where they can best minister to health and societies, to conversation of families, and honour of communities; it teaches men to keep their words, that themselves may be secured in all their just interests, and to do good to others that good may be done to them; it forbids biting one another, that we may not be devoured by one another; and commands obedience to superiors, that we may not be ruined in confusions; it combines governments, and confirms all good laws, and makes peace, and opposes and prevents wars where they are not just, and where they are not necessary. It is a religion that is life and spirit, not consisting in cere-

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monies and external amusements, but in the services of the heart, and the real fruit of lips and hands, that is, of good words and good deeds; it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable to his excellencies, that is, worship him with the best thing we have, and make all things else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our neighbour by which he may be better; it is the perfection of the natural law, and agreeable to our natural necessities, and promotes our natural ends and designs; it does not destroy reason, but instructs it in very many things, and complies with it in all; it hath in it both heat and light, and is not more effectual than it is beauteous; it promises every thing that we can desire, and yet promises nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims war against all vices, and generally does command every virtue; it teaches us with ease to mortify those affections which reason does scarce reprove, because she hath not strength enough to conquer; and it does create in us those virtues which reason of herself never knew, and, after they are known, could never approve sufficiently. It is a doctrine in which nothing is superfluous or burdensome, nor yet is there any thing wanting which can procure happiness to mankind, or by which God can be glorified: and if wisdom, and mercy, and justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and purity, and meekness, and contentedness, and charity, be images of God and rays of divinity, then that doctrine in which all these shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else is ingredient, must needs be from God; and that all this is true in the doctrine of Jesus, needs no other probation but the reading of the words."

But to return to the subject on which this paper began; I venture to affirm that no man, however sensible and well informed in other respects, can understand completely the works of Taylor, Hooker, Milton,

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and many other most celebrated old English writers, without an accurate knowledge of Latin and Greek etymology. Yet alas! how many are bitter enemies to Latin and Greek, to whom, I am pretty sure, those languages never did any harm.

EVENING XLIV.

ON THE PRINTS IN PRAYER BOOKS, BIBLES, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

There can be no doubt but they who added prints to religious books, intended to assist the reader in raising in his mind clear and striking ideas of sacred things; but the artists they employed have commonly been so injudicious as to render figures of a most serious and solem kind objects of derision.

All graphical representations of God the Father are to be disapproved; for, instead of exalting our idea of the Deity, they elevate (to use a word in the sense animadverted on in the preceding Evening) or lower it. In thinking of God, imagination forms an obscure but grand image of a sublime existence, ΚΤΑΕΙ ΓΑΙΟΝ, and the heart adores it; but the hand of the artist at once diminishes its grandeur, and divests it of its glory. Think of the great God of heaven and earth, drawn by a painter under the figure of a little decrepit old man with a long beard, sitting in an elbow chair.

The Scripture introduces God speaking or appearing with terrific majesty. "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord. Tremble thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters." It belongs to injudicious limners and sculptors to render this presence familiar. Hayman has one or two designs for Newton's Milton, in which God is introduced; and in that which is prefixed to the sixth

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book, the Deity appears terrible, and the artist has shewn great skill; but yet he could never equal imagination, and therefore his best efforts appear defective. Obscurity aggrandizes images of celestial beings; once delineate them on paper, and render the idea clear and determinate, and you put an end to the awe of the beholder.

I can easily understand, and readily admire, as a strong poetical figure, the touching of Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire; but I cannot admire the engraver's representation, in some Bibles, of an angel from heaven with a blacksmith's tongs burning the poor prophet's lips with a live coal.

There is a great analogy between poetry and painting; but yet poetry may represent many things with great vivacity and beauty which will not bear an exact delineation on paper or canvass, without a shocking bathos.

The representations of Satan, in many serious books, is so ridiculous, that one would almost imagine the artist intended to laugh at the idea of such a being. Who can bear some prints of demoniacs, where the possessed are exhibited vomiting up little black devils with cloven feet and long tails? If artists thought such figures likely to excite or preserve devotion, they must have been as weak as their admirers.

But as they have erred by familiarity, so also from ill-placed grandeur. The Nativity has ever been the favourite subject of painters. Truth required that they should exhibit a stable; but, in order to dignify so mean a place, they usually introduce a superb and fluted column of the Grecian architecture. The ox, the ass, and the manger, are faintly exhibited; but the grand pillar strikes the spectator with ideas of sumptuous magnificence. The birth of our Saviour in this humiliating place was intended to recommend humility.

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by the force of example: but the painter comes, and, by a strange metamorphosis, converts the stable to a gorgeous palace. The artifice intended to raise veneration causes contempt, and the apparent falsehood is highly indecent when it obtrudes itself among the pages of the Holy Bible.

Few books have had a greater popularity than the works of Bishop Taylor. Several of them are adorned with good plates by Faithorne; but disgraced by others of a ridiculous kind. The frontispiece to the Rules of Holy Dying cannot but excite mirth even in those who do not habitually sit in the seat of the scorner. On one side is the statue of a clergyman in his canonicals, with the inscription on the base, *Mercurius Christianus.* In the clouds opposite to him, is the figure of an old man, with a flag in one hand and a crown in the other, in a sitting posture, intended to represent Jesus Christ. My reader will immediately see the absurdity of introducing *Mercurius* in the same picture with our Saviour. On the other side is represented, in a most childish manner, hell and the devil. Here the figures are shockingly deformed; but they are calculated to strike terror into none but children, and those who labour under the weakest superstition. The book, in many parts, is excellent, and has been read by the devout with great edification. It is to be regretted that it was deformed by such a picture, which appears to be dictated by folly, which is ludicrous in the eyes of every sensible observer, and which might have been dispensed with.

The prints inserted in the Common Prayer Books are of a kind which none but the ignorant and vulgar can admire; and even they can receive no advantage from them. Such persons may be diverted by them from devotion, instead of being guided to it, or animated in it. The cut entitled, Jesus tempted by the

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Devil, is almost as ludicrous as if it had come from Hogarth or Bunbury. The devil has a crown and sceptre, a modern coat, apparently a pair of boots, and from his rump hangs a tail resembling what is called a pig-tail.

Endeavours to represent the Trinity by a triangle with a dove in the centre, might be spared. The miraculous gift of tongues has been lowered in the reader's conception by the painter's art. In most sculptures angels are too much familiarized to be revered.

In Sparke's Feasts and Fasts there is an engraving to represent our Saviour's passion. He is drawn praying in the garden, and supposed to be saying—"Father, if thou wilt, take this cup from me, &c. And there appeared an angel from heaven comforting him." The cup is in this place evidently a figurative expression; but the artist represents an angel actually reaching out of the clouds a real cup, in the form of a common drinking glass or rummer, and handing it in the attitude of a tavern-waiter holding out a goblet of wine.

Nelson's Festivals is an excellent book, and a great favourite with all the devout. I am concerned that it should be disgraced by two paltry plates, as frontispieces, which lessen the reverence due to the whole subject. On the back ground of one are our Saviour and Satan on the mountain. Satan is represented with a tail, as usual; and, if he had not wings, would present the idea of a cat standing upon her hinder legs. It is improbable that any Christian can be delighted or improved by such figures; but it is certain, that many may be offended by them, and lose that veneration for sacred things, which was favourable to their virtue and their peace.

By inspecting popular books of devotion, many other absurd prints might easily be pointed out; but I mean

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not to increase the ridicule. I wish all such disgraceful prints could be torn out and committed to the flames. What an idea must a Mahometan or a sensible Indian entertain of Christianity, when he sees such silly figures in books sanctioned by the most awful authority?

I know it will be said that such prints are intended only for weak brethren and sisters, for children, and old men and women in their dotage. Perhaps this is true; but others unavoidably see them, and they suggest a ridiculous idea on sacred subjects, not easily to be banished when once admitted. He who has so far divested himself of natural awe as to laugh at what is venerable, will not, without a greater effort than most men are willing to make, raise in his mind a due degree of respect, in the contemplation of heaven itself and its almighty King.

The greatest painters, whom the world has yet seen, havc shewn that they were able to represent sacred subjects, not only without lowering them, but with great addition to their inherent sublimity. They chose grand subjects, and their genius expanded to grasp the magnitude. Such, and such only, may be imitated by the little artists who draw for common books of devotion; but I think it would be a good rule, never to represent either the God omnipotent, or the Evil Spirit, embodied. Painters should not deviate into heathenism by confounding Jehovah with Jupiter, or Satan with Pluto. What mortal hand shall presume to paint Him in a mortal form and a material vestment, who is diffused over all space, and who clothes himself with light as with a garment?

Let the limner practise an excellent rule suggested by Horace for the poet:

Quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquat.

"The subject which he cannot adorn, let him prudently decline."

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EVENING XLV.

ON THE SAFETY AND HAPPINESS OF A LIFE OF OBSCURITY.

The choice of Hercules, and other pieces of a similar tendency to be found among the ancient moralists, were a beautiful and efficacious mode of conveying a fine moral lesson. They powerfully stimulated the minds of young persons to neglect the blandishments of vice, and to follow virtue over the rugged steep that leads to glory. Hercules made an honourable choice; and his example was intended to fire the soul with emulative ardour.

Ambition, like his, is useful, as it calls for those fine exertions which contribute to meliorate the condition of man, to improve all that Providence has allotted him, to perfect art, and to adorn society. Happy it is for the public that man is so formed as, for the sake of fame, to relinquish ease, and devote his time, his health, and his life, to labours, which, while they dignify himself, enrich, embellish, and aggrandize an empire.

And great is the pleasure attendant on exertion, and sweet the reward of applauding fellow-creatures, when the exertion is virtuous and successful.

Magnum iter intendo; sed dat mihi gloria vires.

But there is a great deal of unsuccessful exertion in pursuit of fame, and many, after sowing in pain and labour, reap only a harvest of disappointment.

For the sake of these and of others, who find not opportunities to distinguish themselves, it is useful to suggest consolatory topics; such as point out the pains and penalties of fame, and the ease and pleasure of a life led in retirement. Nor is it fair to attribute whatever is said on this side of the question to the same motive which induced the fox to exclaim, that the grapes were sour. There are certainly a thousand solid comforts to be enjoyed in a state of obscurity,

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which are bartered for the flattering distinction of popular applause.

He who is labouring to emerge from obscurity, and whose mottos are the spirited passages of Virgil,

> ——tentanda via est, quâ me quoque possum
> Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora.—
> ——aliquid jamdudum invadere magnum
> Mens agitat mihi NEC PLACIDA CONTENTA QUIETE EST.
>
> VIRG.

immediately draws upon himself the watchful eyes of competition. His equals, over whom he attempts to rise, shoot at him from the ground the shafts of envy, and those who have already risen, assail him from the turret with the missile weapons of jealousy. The success and final result of his attempts are doubtful; but, in the mean time, the wounds and arrows of outrageous enemies are sensibly felt, and often inflict on his peace a wound that admits no cure.

When a man is once rendered conspicuous, once become the subject of conversation, not only those who envy his distinction, but those who, from want of sense or of knowledge, misunderstand his conduct or mistake his meaning, employ themselves by secret influence or open enmity, to bring him down to their own level.

The greatest excellence is the most likely to be misunderstood; for few are qualified to be competent judges of singular pre-eminence. It is a just opinion, that they who would form a sound judgment in learning, in arts, or in life, of an exalted degree of perfection, must themselves possess it, and be able, while they give the criticism, to furnish the example.

From the malice of envy, the mistakes of ignorance, the levity of thoughtlessness, it is impossible that he who is lifted up and become a mark, should not frequently be wounded with a poisoned arrow. If he has sensibility, his condition must be painful though it may be exalted. Like the traveller on a bleak hill, he

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must bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, and envy the shepherd in the vale his hovel and his cot.

It is a trite remark, that the smallest specks are most visible in the whitest raiment. The common infirmities of human nature, arising from bodily sickness or momentary ill-temper, are noticed in conspicuous characters, and exaggerated by malicious ingenuity. They are remembered long, and perhaps never forgiven. In a common man, who would have taken notice of such peccadilloes as are handed to posterity of Samuel Johnson? The little infirmities of the man have given such offence, as to prejudice many against the writer.

But the votary of fame will not be troubled with externals only. He has within him a restless spirit, which suffers not his eyelids to close, in the soft hours when unambitious mortals enjoy the sweetest slumber; and while others taste the delight of oblivious slumber,

———Νηδυμον υπνον.———

Μαλακω δεδεμενοι υπνω,———

of him it may be said, he must not spend the night in sleep,

———ου χρη ατακτοιχρον εοδειν.

A state of such solicitude cannot but lose many solid satisfactions, though it should be allowed, as is indeed true, that the alternate excitation of hope and fear is attended with considerable delight, in consequence of the exercise it affords to the animal spirits and to the imagination.

It were easy to add on this subject, an abundance of common-place remarks on ambition, glory, vanity, fame, ease, retirement; but this kind of common-place, which every one allows to be true and solid, every one neglects, because, like the sun, it is self-evident and familiar. I wish to draw my reflections from real observations on life;

Respicere exemplar vitæ et veras hinc ducere voces—Hor.

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From real observation then I am able to pronounce, that persons who live in their families a regular and temperate life, performing their relative, social, and religious duties, appear to enjoy more tranquillity and self-possession, than the various tribes that are struggling to emerge from the level on which their birth and circumstances have placed them. Such as these, ever restless, taste not the pleasures of repose; and, as the desires of ambition, like those of avarice, increase with possession, they are strangers, as long as they live, to contentment, the sweetest ingredient of life.

When it is considered, that besides the certainty of incurring slander and misrepresentation, of feeling much uneasiness, and of foregoing many most desirable comforts, the ambitious are also in danger of infamy where they expected fame, and contempt where they demanded honour, they will, it is to be hoped, repress their ardour, and learn to seek enjoyment in governing themselves and their families according to wisdom and justice. And let them not think that the public service is deserted by them; for when every man, according to the Scripture rule, studies to be quiet, and to mind his own business, the public will be better served than by the officious interference of pragmatical activity.

Though the favour and applause of men may gratify vanity, and promote pecuniary interest for a few years, yet of how little value will they appear at the close of life? Men know but little of each other's real character and merit, and frequently err by undervaluing and overvaluing them. They have often lavished fame and glory on the undeserving, and denied them, at least during life, to their greatest benefactors.

Milton had very little reputation as a poet while alive. And as to posthumous fame,

Si post fata venit gloria, sera venit.

Churchill had a thousand times more popularity

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while he lived than Milton. He owed his popularity to politics. These interested the factions of the times. Milton's age was indeed factious and turbulent enough; but he did not write political poetry. And the violent partizans of his time cared little for old Adam and Eve, and the blissful scenes of Eden's Garden.

Men are so apt to envy, to err, and to be ungrateful, that a wise man will take care, if possible, not to let the fabric of his happiness rest on a pillar so tottering as the people's favour. He will endeavour to do good and to act reasonably, and leave popularity to follow her own caprice, and not let it be said of him, that his health and happiness depend on applause or the want of it.

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.—Hor.

It is the great business of Christians to arise above the world, to do right actions, not as men pleasers, but unto God and their own consciences; and happy they, who quietly walk in their pilgrimage through this world through the vale of peace, neither pursuing fame, nor declining it when it comes as the temporal reward of goodness, but looking for approbation to him who seeth the heart, and whose approbation is the only true glory.

But even here man must be on his guard against vain-glory; for many have appeared to be religious, and to despise glory, who were anxiously seeking it, deceiving themselves and others. *Sæpe homo*, says St. Austin, *de vanæ gloriæ contemptu, vanius gloriatur.*

EVENING XLVI.

ON PREJUDICES AGAINST RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

I HOPE my readers will not think that I deviate into an uninteresting subject, when, in the course of the Winter Evenings, I am sometimes led to consider that which is the business of every man, and far more

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important than the finest disquisitions in Science, Ethics, Arts and the Belles' Lettres:

——id, quod
Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,
Æquè neglectum, pueris, senibusque nocebit. HOR.

The solemn stillness of a solitary Winter Evening, naturally leads to the contemplation of religion. Indeed, a subject in which all men are at all times deeply concerned, can never be unseasonable.

I am sorry to observe, that such subjects should be considered as dull. But I was surprised a little while ago, on mentioning my design to touch on religious topics, to hear from a sensible man, that he wished I would not, as I might depend upon it, my book would be more generally acceptable if religious topics were entirely excluded. "If you write a religious book," he said, "you must expect few readers but old women with their spectacles; you will stand no chance of getting rid of the copies, unless the Societies for promoting religious knowledge, and for the propagation of the Gospel, should think proper to give them away."

This prejudice against religious books, which I fear is too prevalent among those who call themselves men of pleasure, gaiety, and fashion, is very unfortunate, as it tends to cut off some of the best opportunities of deriving a knowledge of that, which, through ignorance alone, they rashly despise.

Indeed it must be acknowledged, that in the great abundance of religious books, for which this country is remarkable, there are many which rather injure the cause which they were written to advance. They were perhaps only written for a particular sect or persuasion, and when they fall into the hands of those who are not attached to any party, but judge from their own reason and unbiassed sentiments, they excite ideas

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unfavourable to religion in general. A poor style, wretched arguments, cant, hypocrisy, fanaticism, will give a disgust to the sober-minded; and much more to those who are little inclined to serious ideas, however well recommended by a polished style, and a dispassionate appeal to reason.

Yet such books may perhaps produce a good effect among those classes for whom they were intended, though they appear to persons of education, replete with gross absurdity. They are not therefore to be utterly despised, though they may be neglected; and it is unfair and ill-judged to form an idea of all religion and all religious treatises from the zealous but poor attempts of an illiterate bigot. It is like forming a judgment of all poetry from the works of Blackmore. Though, be it always remembered, that the disciples were poor fishermen, that religion may be understood without critical erudition; and that many a good man without learning has comprehended the vital and essential parts of religion, the religion of the heart, better than the most learned professor of theology in the most celebrated university. While the one was inspecting dictionaries, the other was examining his own bosom; while the one was toiling at languages, the other was engaged in labours of love.

There are in the English language great numbers of religious books, which cannot fall under the censure of absurdity, but are at once rational and beautiful. I wish my reader to enter on the study of religion by reading them, and he will afterwards relish real piety wherever he finds it, even though it should appear in a style of rude simplicity.

But many fashionable freethinkers are much conversant in polite and classical authors; and to pass from them to some of the simple works of mere devotees, is too violent a transition. It is for that reason

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that I recommend to them the sermons of the best writers; and hope they will not be so far prejudiced against them as to contemn them unexamined.

After a taste shall have been formed for religious subjects from the works of Addison, Hooker, Hammond, Taylor, Grotius, Bishop Bull, Dr. Lardner, Locke, Clarke, and all the sermon writers of the first class, the mind will learn to take a pleasure even in those books of humble piety, where the excellence of the thoughts and doctrines must shine by its own lustre, unadorned with the graces of language.

It is natural to suppose, that human inquiry will be most willingly conversant on the most important subjects. Life, death, and immortality, have in them an inherent importance, in comparison with which all other things appear like dust in the balance. There are consequently more books, I believe, in divinity than in any other department of literature.

But can I, after so many and so valuable labours, add any thing useful? I fear not; yet as religion is a subject that must frequently be considered by all who think with seriousness, I have also frequently considered it, and shall beg leave sometimes to write my thoughts of it with that humility which becomes all men, and which perhaps may be particularly required in me.

I am struck with awe at the very subject. A poor frail mortal sits down to examine the works and words of his omnipotent Maker. If he should mistake in his conclusions, he may offend God, and lead others into dangerous temptation.

But he is encouraged by example. He is encouraged by the authority which commissions many to expound the Scriptures, and to teach the people. And if errors are errors of judgment only, unaccompanied with presumption, there is every reason to believe them venial.

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General prejudices against religious writings are highly unreasonable; for what is religion but moral philosophy under a higher sanction than the best human reason could give it; what but the best efforts of human reason, controlled and directed by the will of God?

And can it be illiberal, narrow, unphilosophical, or in any respect unworthy of the most exalted of the human race, to study this will of God? to trace the beams of celestial light wherever the least glimmering appears in this darkling vale?

The study of divinity, or Christian philosophy, is a sublime employment of our faculties worthy of the greatest philosophers. What are mathematics, languages, arts, to the contemplation of the great fountain of all knowledge, of all beauty, of all excellence, the Father of Lights?

Totally to neglect the topics of religion in my Winter Evenings, would, I think, be a culpable omission; and I hope few readers are so little attentive to their chief concern as to think whatever is said on that subject, however imperfectly, destitute of interest.

After so much has been written in this country by the heroes of Christianity, I can indeed hope to add but little; but if I only turn the attention of a few to the subject, the attempt will not be useless; and what pleasure arises from polite letters and classical knowledge can equal that of seeking for one's self, and shewing to others, the things that belong unto peace.

EVENING XLVII.

ON THE CHARACTER OF A PARISH PRIEST.

In the estimation of reason, few, if any, employments, are more honourable than that of the pastor of a parish, the true Shepherd of his people. It is the business of his life to diffuse happiness and knowledge.

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His own wants, and those of his family, require some regard to pecuniary emolument, and justify an endeavour to obtain a competency; but his attention to lucre is but secondary and subordinate. His professional employment, and the purpose of his life, is the communication of happiness and knowledge: a most honourable profession, to be seeking wisdom at the fountain, and to be dispensing it liberally to all who ask for it.

I am speaking of the profession, not of the professors. I am aware that many a satirical tongue will be ready to detract from them, when compared to the profession in theory, and to exaggerate in them those human frailties which in others they would palliate. But even when I descend from the profession to the professors, I think I may affirm, that in no rank of society are more respectable members to be found than in the clerical. They ought, it will be said, to be superior in learning and virtue to others, as the master should excel his scholars, and as their studies and education tend to the advancement of human excellence to its highest perfection. Human frailty excepted, they have been, and often are, what they ought to be, in the eye of reasonable expectation. It is not possible to satisfy the demands of fanaticism, puritanism, and enthusiasm.

Dr. John Burton, a well-known classical scholar, seems to have viewed the character of a parish priest with singular admiration. He frequently speaks of it with a degree of rapture. The following passage from his Sacerdos Parœcialis is pleasing:

O felix studii, qui non ingloria ruris
Otia tutus agit, procul ambitione metuque!
Qui recolens quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque
Providus æternæ meditatur seria vitæ.
Gaudia despiciens peritura; Deoque vocanti,
Cujus sacra gerit, magno lætatus honore,
Impendit curas, animamque relinquit in astris.

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Non illum potuit Syren, damnosa voluptas,
Flectere, non miseros agitans discordia cives,
Nec malesuadus honos, nec lucri prava cupido;
Sed pietas, cœlumque Fides amplexa, remotum
Ad majora vocat; fortunam dona ferentem
Subjiciens pedibus rigidique pericula fati,
Atque alio patriam monstrans sub sole jacentem.
Felix qui, late turbantibus æquora ventis,
Civiles tuta prospectat ab arce tumultus,
Immunis culpæ, simul immunisque pericli!
Cætera securus sancto vacat usque labori
Sedulus et populo prodesse Deoque placere.

He proceeds to exemplify the character by the instances of Bernard Gilpin, Hooker, Herbert, and Hales. To these a long list of men might be added, of whom it is doubtful whether they had not acquired a participation of angelic perfection even in this low abode. They seem to have been sent by Providence as models of excellence, to shew at what height human nature can arrive by its virtuous efforts, assisted with divine grace, notwithstanding its inherent weakness and corruption.

Many parish priests no less exemplary than these have died unknown,

———caruerunt quia vate sacro.———

Multitudes who lived in the practice of every Christian virtue, and died in the faith, truly saints, if any mortal can possess that title, now sleep in peace, with nothing over their graves but the green-sward. In the estimation of heaven, it is probable that they were deemed more worthy of a mausoleum than kings and conquerors.

As a tree is known by its fruits, let Christianity be tried by the virtuous men it has produced. I do not think that the most celebrated philosophers among the heathens have equalled the virtue of many priests, who spent their days in the uniform practice of piety and benevolence; of many whose lives are accurately recorded; and of thousands more who lived and died in

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the obscurity which they loved, in the low-roofed vicarage of some sequestered hamlet.

But objectors are inclined to complain that the labours of the parish-priest are not often attended with any remarkable effect; that parishes continue profligate notwithstanding the preaching and example of the most pious and learned incumbent. Profligate they may be, it is true, notwithstanding these advantages; yet is it not reasonable to believe that they would be more profligate without them?

But that the clergy may possess all that weight to which their characters, their instructions, and their services entitle them, it is necessary that the richer and higher orders in their parishes should set an example of paying them respect, and co-operate with them in securing, as far as it is possible, a regular and decent observation of the Lord's day, and of all holy ordinances.

The great requisite is, to give the clergyman of the parish authority. But the rustic esquire and purse-proud yeoman are often jealous of his influence, and, instead of augmenting, are usually ready to diminish his power by vexatious opposition. They form a party to carry every point against him in the vestry; little considering, that, in lowering the *persona ecclesiæ*, or the parson (which was once a name of respect), they contribute to destroy the subordination of society, and to lessen themselves in the eyes of their inferiors. The clergy and gentry should mutually and cordially assist each other in promoting good morals, good order, and every thing conducive to social peace, to virtue in high life, and to humble industry.

These are not times in which ecclesiastics unassisted by the laity can do much towards the reformation of the public. They were once viewed with a reverence which secured obedience to their exhortations; but

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this was before the general prevalence of infidelity. The meanest of the vulgar have now learned to talk of the national religion as a mode of superstition, and to despise its ministers, especially when a demand is made on their property. I have seen low persons who revenged the exaction of tithes, not only on the rectors and vicars, but on the Church, on the Christian religion, and on the Bible.

Those among the inferior ranks, who still retain a reverence for religion, are too often seduced by enthusiasts from the parish church, and endeavour to evince their zeal and attachment to their self-appointed pastors, by professing a contempt, if not a hatred, for the regular minister of the parish. His endeavour to preserve the dignity of his order is stigmatised as pride, his claim of his just dues as avarice, his rational style of preaching as the languid performance of one who is labouring for hire, in an employment which he dislikes.

These opinions are disseminated with industry, and thus the lower part of the parish are soon divided into two parts, equally inclined to obstruct the beneficial operations of the minister, the sceptical and profligate on the one hand, and the enthusiastic on the other; unless therefore the better sort unite with him, and give him that power which is necessary to accomplish the purposes of his profession, he is in danger of being set at nought, and all his endeavours may be rendered ineffectual.

A clergyman has often a difficult part to act. The times are such, that all the richer and higher people of his parish, however vulgar their minds, affect to be people of fashion. They bring into the village the manners and amusements of the metropolis. If, on one hand, he refuses to join in them, he is an unwelcome visitor among the rich; and if, on the other, he

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is seen too much engaged in them, he is despised by the poor.

The rich should allow him to be a little singular and reserved, without thinking him disagreeable or unfashionable. He is a public character, and stands connected with all the parish, of whatever degree, in a very intimate and important relation. It is his duty to serve both rich and poor, and in making himself agreeable to one, he must not so far forget the other as to neglect his duty and to give offence. But nothing in clergymen gives greater offence to the poor than *avoir du monde.*

Whether the parochial minister possess the graceful and polite accomplishments or not, the rich parishioners should make it a point to support him with their countenance, in all the duties of his office. This support of the richer parishioners appears to me to be the principal thing wanted to render the clergy efficient in promoting the great purposes of their salutary institution.

EVENING XLVIII.

ON THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

In this free country a strict plan of police cannot easily be established and carried into complete execution. Preventive measures and summary proceedings would often infringe that liberty which is an Englishman's glory. The consequence is, that capital punishments are more frequent here than in absolute governments.

But capital punishments, though shocking in their nature, and conducted so as to strike terror, are yet found experimentally insufficient to promote a general reformation. I say nothing of their very questionable lawfulness except in the cases marked out by Scripture. They cut down indeed the tree that bears evil fruit; but it would be a more successful method to

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graft the stock with a more generous cion. If it is possible to meliorate the root, the tree that would otherwise have only cumbered the ground, will in time mature its beautiful blossoms to clusters of fruit equally useful and delicious.

But in what manner shall the reformation begin? Old offenders may be sometimes restrained by fear, but seldom admit an entire renovation. The experiment therefore must chiefly be made on the young and susceptible.

The children of the rich are usually educated with considerable expence. Whether the methods in which they are trained are the best that could be contrived or not, it is certain that the rich cannot, from their state of independence, fall under the regulation of the charitable. Poor children then are the objects on which charity must exert herself in her endeavours to effect a national reform.

The majority of every nation must of necessity consist of the poor: and if the majority can be improved, there is great reason to suppose that many in the minority will receive benefit from the example; and that, upon the whole, so much good will be produced as may be said to meliorate the morals of a whole people.

Charity-schools were established with this laudable intention; and, though many plausible objections have been made to them, yet there is reason to think that, as far as they extended, they contributed considerably to the accomplishment of their original purpose. But though they are numerous, they are by no means universal; and, on their present plan, they cannot possibly comprehend all the poor children of a populous parish.

To supply their defects, and to serve many most desirable purposes, Mr. Raikes of Gloucester has instituted Sunday Schools. To the honour of the age, his example has been eagerly followed. The plan is at

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present only in its infancy. Time and experience can alone shew, in a full and infallible light, its real utility. It is proper, however, to render it an object of general attention, that it may have the advantage of a fair trial.

They who know how much time is necessary for the instruction of children, will entertain doubts whether an hour or two, after an intermission of six days, will be sufficient for any great purpose, and whether the little that is then learned will not be obliterated from the memory by the natural effect of time, and the intervention of a variety of objects which have no relation to the Sunday's lesson. Children who go to school spend seven or eight hours every day in the week, for a year or two, before they learn to read with habitual facility.

This cannot be denied; but then it should be considered that the superintendent may set a short task to be learned in the course of the week, such as the child can attend to with advantage, under the eye of the parents, who, though they should not be able to read, may yet, by their authority, take care that the child looks into its book during half an hour every evening, when the daily labour is concluded. Without the co-operation of paternal authority I fear little will be done; with it, there is a chance that something may; and the parents themselves will derive some benefit, by virtuously endeavouring, according to the best of their power, to promote their children's improvement. If the parents can read, and are duly desirous of serving their children, they may instruct them according to the method prescribed by the teacher, and the Sunday attendance may be considered as a probationary exercise or public examination.

But if the child should not learn to read, he may yet learn something more valuable. He may learn the

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principles of religion, and moral honesty. He may learn to say proper prayers, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Catechism, by rote and frequent repetition; and they who know the extreme ignorance of children in the lowest rank, will not deem these contemptible acquisitions. They are such as may have a good effect on the whole lives of the labouring part of mankind, save them from many errors and crimes, and at the same time, conduce to promote a spirit of piety and a due degree of obedience to law and authority.

Christianity may certainly be understood to all the purposes of salvation without much learning; and perhaps the honest labourer, who receives the plain instruction of the Sunday schoolmaster, and treasures it in his heart, and acts up to the little knowledge he possesses with firm faith and true humility, is a better Christian than the learned theologist who disputes with all the pride of syllogistic skill, and the malice of polemic strife, in the schools of divinity. Compare the child who has learned only his Catechism, to the mere vagabond, or the wretched pick-pocket in London streets, who scarcely ever heard the name of God or Jesus Christ, but in an oath or execration, who imbibes the arts of villany from his cradle, and dies by the gibbet before twenty.

Although children should learn nothing, in consequence of the shortness of the time devoted to instruction, and the distant intervals of it, yet it is certain, that during those hours, which are the most dangerous in the week, they are kept from bad practices, and the contagion of bad examples. If they were not confined, and under the master's eye, they would be in the streets in the purlieus of the town, in the churchyard, gaming for halfpence, quarrelling, fighting, and practising every vice of which their age is capable, and which opportunities allow.

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Perhaps when children are industriously and soberly brought up by their parents, and employed in sedentary manufactures during the whole week, it may be injurious to health, and quite unnecessary, to confine and employ them on the day which God intended for their rest and refreshment. It is cruelty in such a case to prevent them from enjoying air and exercise.

Indeed the institution appears to me to be most properly confined to the very lowest of the people, those who are almost vagrants, and who have scarcely a friend to assist them. The children of poor and laborious people are usually sent at their own expence to petty schools, and brought up as decently as can reasonably be required: and to confine such as these on Sunday evenings, or to unite them even at school with the idle and vagabond, may possibly do them more injury than service.

The benefit to be derived from Sunday Schools, even to the proper object of the charity, must in every place depend greatly on the schoolmaster; and I fear the stipend usually paid is such as will not engage, after the novelty is worn off, such persons as are likely to secure attention and obedience by their wisdom or authority. Parents will not suffer a master of a degree as low as their own, to punish, to admonish, or to dictate with a decisive air to their children. Great obstacles may often arise to their institution from the pride and obstinacy of parents in low life.

But the design is generous, and it may produce greater good than many apprehend. It may contribute to preserve Christianity among us in its due vigour. It may rescue many from a wretched life, an ignominious death, and worse consequences in futurity.

Whatever doubts the cold and cautious may entertain, the sanguine zeal which its promoters display does them honour as men and Christians, and will have its

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reward. Whatever has so many promising appearances of being able to do great good, as the establishment of Sunday Schools, ought certainly to have a trial, and not to be rejected, till the fullest experience shall have proved it ineffectual or impracticable.

The rich have so many advantages, both for enjoyment of life and the improvement of their talents, that, in gratitude for them, they ought to contribute whatever they can to the comfort and instruction of the child of poverty. Christianity teaches us to think, that the giver of all good gifts will consider this as a grateful return to him; and experience proves, that the improvement of the poor in good morals contributes greatly to the security and accommodation of the opulent.

I am afraid, indeed, the same experience proves also, the poor are not always made better servants, better subjects, or happier in themselves, by the little and superficial school-attainments which enable them to read novels, instead of the Bible; and to write love-letters, instead of keeping accounts and regulating their economy. But still no man has a right to deny them the means of improvement. The light of the sun may afford opportunity for villanous and mischievous actions, but what mortal shall presume to veil it from his fellow mortals, even if it were possible?

EVENING XLIX.

ON THE CHARACTER OF LORD LYTTELTON.

Though the first Lord Lyttelton was not of a very vigorous mind, yet, upon a review of his life and works, he appears to deserve a greater share of esteem, than many are disposed to allow him. He is spoken of in the Biographical prefaces to the English Poets, with that faint praise, which amounts to contemptuous censure. But in this circumstance, he is on a level with

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some of the first writers and best men whom the annals of English literature have recorded. All eminent writers who were contemporaries with Johnson, were seen by him through a medium which gave an unnatural tinge to their complexions, and distorted their real shape.

Lyttelton's intellects, compared with those of his censorial biographer, were, I think, feeble. On such a comparison, he appears but as a lamb to a lion. Johnson, in the consciousness of his strength, might have allowed Lyttelton great merit, without feeling the least propensity to invidious detraction. Posterity, if not the present age, will place them both in the rank they respectively deserve. Their own decisions concerning each other, will avail but little.

I wish to wave a comparison in which Lyttelton will ever appear greatly inferior. I chuse rather to consider his absolute merit, both as a writer and as a man. In both these characters, considering all circumstances, he will appear worthy of national esteem; and I am the more desirous of supporting his character, because I consider him as furnishing an excellent example to young and ingenuous noblemen who often err by the bad models which they are accustomed to behold and taught to admire.

The juvenile compositions of Lyttelton, are to be considered merely as exercises voluntarily performed by a well-disposed young man, for the sake of his improvement in style. His observations on the Life of Cicero, considered in this light, are certainly entitled to esteem, though they fall below the style and ingenuity of Middleton; from whose Biographical Work, however, it has lately been the fashion, very unjustly, to detract the merit that was once allowed them. The other little pieces placed at the beginning of Lyttelton's Works, are to be viewed only as prolusions and

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trials of skill, very meritorious, as the amusement of a man of quality, though by no means worthy of being praised as master-pieces of composition. But surely it was great virtue in Lyttelton to spend his youth in such employment, while those of his age, rank, and prospects, were usually engaged in all the follies and vices of vain-glorious dissipation.

The Persian Letters do not exceed mediocrity. The plan, though by no means novel, afforded scope for wit, humour, and ingenious satire. But there is little in the Persian Letters, which a man of common abilities and common observation could not have produced. The book, however, has been popular among the young and superficial; though the observations in it are so trite and obvious, as not to attach the minds of those who are deeply read either in learning or in life.

The Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, are so excellent in their design, and so able in the execution, that they entitle the author to a high rank among those writers whom I call the lay-divines of this country. I think Lyttelton's genius was formed for divinity; and I cannot but wish that he had taken orders, and become Archbishop of Canterbury. The church would have found in him an able advocate with his pen, and a shining ornament by his example. Dr. Johnson, always a zealous friend to religion, does justice to the Observations of St. Paul, by saying of them, that they form a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer.

Such advocates for the faith as Lord Lyttelton, always carry great weight, exclusively of the intrinsic force of their arguments; because they are supposed to be free from professional prejudice, and the bias of temporal advantage. Locke, Addison, Nelson, West, and Lyttelton, are volunteers in the church militant,

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whose prowess excited by principle alone, and arising from conviction of a righteous cause, entitles them to be considered among the most glorious soldiers of Jesus Christ. If Lyttelton had written nothing else but the Observations on St. Paul's Conversion, his fame would have been founded on a firmer basis than it stands upon at present. That foundation is of marble. Some of his other works are formed of too slight and perishable materials to support a fabric designed for posterity.

The Dialogues of the Dead have been much celebrated; but inclined as I am to favour the reputation of their author, I cannot help agreeing with the judicious critics who think that they are two little laboured; and that they are such as a man of moderate abilities and reading might have written without much study. They have neither the wit of Lucian, the grace of Fontenelle, nor the florid beauties of Fenelon. Like the Persian Letters, they appear to be best calculated for the young and superficial. The three Dialogues by that highly accomplished lady, Mrs. Montagu, have, I think, more spirit than any in the collection.

The parliamentary speeches exhibit little to interest the reader, since the questions which gave rise to them have ceased to be controverted. They cannot be classed with the remains of ancient eloquence. They have nothing to be blamed, nor much to be commended. They display marks of an honest and good mind, which the old rhetoricians have said is the first quality of an orator, and they betray no want of competent ability.

The Biographical Prefacer has given no opinion of the History of Henry the second. He has confined his narrative to the recital of a few trifling circumstances attending the publication of it; such as argue an excess of timidity in the historian, concerning the reception

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of his book; but such as do not affect the merits of the history, any otherwise, than as they seem to imply some degree of weakness in the mind of the author.

As Johnson says nothing of this book, it is probable that he had not read it; and indeed it is rather uninviting to classical scholars, however it may please the antiquary. It is however greatly laboured. There is an abundance of matter, the result of curious research. But the style, though clear and easy, is not animated with the Roman spirit, nor elevated with classical dignity. It is, therefore, not much read by those who read for other pleasure besides that which arises from historical information. It is, however, intrinsically valuable; and becomes more estimable, when considered as the voluminous production of a man in the rank of life which is exposed to all the temptations of indolence, if not to those of vicious extravagance. Such a history from any man would have been highly respectable; but from an opulent peer, and a man of fashion, it affords so good an example to the great, that it ought to be commended with every praise that does not amount to an unjust and adulatory encomium. It is the work of a man of sense and parts, if not of great genius; it is the work of a good man and a patriot endeavouring to diffuse the love of virtue and of liberty. I imagine it to be the work, on which the Author desired to build that fame which was to descend to future ages. He meant it as a monument durable as brass; but I doubt whether it will stand against the attacks of time.

The Poems of Lord Lyttelton are, for the most part, merely the juvenile amusements of a polished mind, enjoying and improving the happy opportunities of a learned leisure. Though they reach not sublimity of excellence, they display a sufficient degree of beauty to prove that their Author could have done better, if he

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had applied the whole force of his mind to them, and if he had made poetry his study rather than his idle diversion. They have been much read, and are still favourites among those who admire the mild efforts of the gentle muse. To judge of their merits fairly, a reader should consider the poetry that preceded, rather than that which has been subsequent to them. They have however a smoothness of versification, and a tenderness of sentiment, which must please the ear and the heart. Those who are in search of deep pathos and exalted grandeur, must have recourse to the Miltons and Shakespeares; but those who desire soft elegance, grace, and sentiment, will find what they wish for in the poetical playthings of Lord Lyttelton.

Having thus taken a transient view of the writer, I proceed to consider the man.

His youth appears to have been regular and virtuous, from the letters to his father, which are highly respectful; and in a style very different from that of the libertine, and the extravagant young man of fashion and quality. I think they bear internal evidence that he was a good son.

That he was a good husband, there is every reason to believe, from the sorrow which he felt at the loss of his first wife. She died after living with him five years, in a state of happiness, said to have been rarely exceeded in the nuptial state. "He solaced his grief," as Johnson rather slightingly observes, "by writing a long poem to her memory." That poem is certainly full of tender sentiment, and seems to have come immediately from the heart of a disconsolate and undissembling mourner. Johnson himself did not lament the loss of his Tetty, in a manner so pleasing, or which bore stronger marks of sincere affection.

The second marriage of Lord Lyttelton was not so productive of happiness as the first; but the cause

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is not, I believe, publicly recorded, if it is clearly ascertained.

That he was a kind and indulgent father, there is every reason to believe, though his son was imprudent and unfortunate.

In public life, he was a warm friend to liberty, an indefatigable man of business, a patron of letters, as appears in the instances of Mallet and Thomson, and in every respect a good citizen, actuated by generous, wise, and patriotic principles.

Considering the whole of his character, I may pronounce that he was an ornament to the peerage, and an honour to his age.

If Lord Lyttelton does not possess the very first rank among men, it is not through a defect of great virtues, noble principles, and philanthropic purposes; but from a want of that robust vigour, and that fervent ardour of genius, which nature must supply, and art can only direct and improve. Let him be compared as a peer, a patriot, a philosopher, and a man, to his celebrated contemporary, Lord Chesterfield. By the herd of worldlings and witlings, the preference will undoubtedly be given to Lord Chesterfield; but men of solid sense and enlarged views, men of good hearts, lovers of mankind more than lovers of vanity and sordid interest, will unite their suffrages in favour of Lord Lyttelton. They will ask, in reviewing them together, whose examples and precepts are most likely to be most beneficial to society, those of the tutor of dissimulation, or those of him who taught and practised what he taught, in spite of fashion and prejudice, the love of truth, virtue, and Christianity? It would be an affront to mankind to offer a formal answer to this inquiry.

But there are many, among whom I am sorry to have been obliged to enumerate Johnson, who have

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derogated from the character of Lyttelton, by a disrespectful mention of his name, his writings, and his conduct. Johnson was influenced by some degree of jealousy to despise one, whom, as he wrote at the same time with himself, though in an inferior manner, he could not but consider as a rival in the contest for fame. Others are enemies to the memory of Lyttelton, for no other reason than because they are enemies to virtue. Such persons endeavour to throw contempt on his writing, by representing the author as weak and vain. If they faintly allow him to have been a good man, the concession is made with an expressive sneer. The detraction of persons who are themselves too deeply corrupted to see and admire the charms of a virtuous and religious character, deserves to be treated with that contempt, which they are endeavouring to fix on a man deserving of honour: and every effort should be made to recommend such an example as Lyttelton's, to the rising generation of nobility, who should be taught, while they shun his weaknesses to aspire at equalling and surpassing his moral and intellectual excellence.

EVENING L.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF JULIUS CÆSAR.

Julius Cæsar, like the greater part of men distinguished by genius, began to display his inventive powers in the pleasant walks of poesy. In early youth he wrote a Tragedy called Œdipus, and the Praise of Hercules, which I imagine was a kind of epic poem; but Augustus prohibited the publication of them both, lest they should expose any marks of juvenile imperfection, and disgrace the imperial family. It should be mentioned also, as an instance of Julius Cæsar's industry, that he compiled a volume, to which he gave

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the name of *Dicta collectanea*, consisting of the remarkable apophthegms of remarkable men. Augustus suppressed this also, from a scrupulous regard for the honour of the house of Cæsar.

One cannot help wishing that the juvenile productions of so distinguished a man, had been preserved as curiosities. Though they might not have been exempt from the defects of immature judgment, there is every reason to conjecture that they abounded in elegance.

At a later period, this great man wrote a poem, entitled Iter, or the Itinerary. It gave an account of his expeditious progress from Rome to Hispania ulterior; and was probably in the style and manner of Horace's Iter Brundusium.

I am the rather induced to believe that Cæsar wrote in the Horatian manner *sermoni propriore*, because the little specimen which remains of Cæsar's poetry is in that style. It is the well-known fragment on Terence, preserved by Donatus.

Tu quoque, tu in summis, O dimidiate Menander, &c.

In the dialogue of an admirable author on the causes of the corruption of eloquence, there is a passage which reflects but little honour on Cæsar as a poet. Cæsar and Brutus, says he, wrote verses and deposited them in libraries; they did not make better verses than Cicero, but yet more happily, since fewer knew that they made them at all. *Non melius quam Cicero, at felicius, quia illos fecisse pauciores sciunt.*

Cæsar's verses, it is probable, were not very stiking, as may be collected from an anecdote recorded of them by Plutarch. When Cæsar was taken by pirates, he solaced himself in his disagreeable situation, by composing orations and verses. He read his verses to his captors, hoping to receive the flattering tribute of their applause; but the hardy adventurers had no ear for verse. Cæsar gave way to a momentary resentment

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called them stupid barbarians, and affirmed that they deserved crucifixion. It cannot be supposed that he revenged the mortification his pride received, in a manner so tyrannical; but it is said that, as soon as he was liberated, he ordered the poor pirates to be nailed to the cross. Crucifixion, it is to be hoped, was a punishment for the want of honesty, and not of taste.

Notwithstanding this vindictive spirit, it would have been happy if this ambition had been poetical rather than political. It might have saved the deluge of blood through which he waded to empire. According to his own confession, the conquest of Gaul occasioned the loss of one million two hundred thousand lives; and it is supposed, that the civil wars in which he was engaged, destroyed an equal number. Dreadful effects of pride! Two millions four hundred thousand lives destroyed by one man! Remarkable instance of the instability of human grandeur! for he enjoyed the peaceable possession of his power only five months!

But the present business is to consider Cæsar in the light of a scholar, not as a soldier. If his character as a poet is disputable, his talents as an orator, and his learning and sagacity as a philosopher, are highly and justly esteemed. By a rare union of different abilities he excelled at once in the elegance of polite letters and in the severer department of recondite science.

As an orator, Cicero places him in the first rank; and Quintilian thinks he would have rivalled Cicero, had he devoted his abilities to the rostrum or tribunal. The elegance of his language was the peculiar excellence which distinguished him as an orator. He was more attic than Cicero; and if he had transmitted his best orations down to posterity, Cicero would not have stood alone at the head of Roman orators. Cicero himself generously extols him, and thinks him

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equal to those who had made the study of eloquence the business of their lives.

But eloquence was cultivated by Cæsar only in subservience to his ambition. He knew that the Triumviri, in the plenitude of their usurping power, could cut off the heads and hands of mere orators, and nail them to the rostrum. He knew, that though Cicero inculcated the doctrine that arms should yield to the gown, and the laurel to the tongue, it was the sword and the axe which, in his time, carried all before it.

Amidst all the turbulence of ambition, so extensive was his capacity, that he found both time and inclination to write two books, addressed to Cicero, on the cool and dispassionate subjects of grammatical analogy. In the dedication, he paid Cicero a great compliment, though if we may judge from his own conduct, it was insincere. He congratulated the orator on having obtained a laurel more honourable than all military triumph, as it was more glorious to extend the limits of the Roman genius, than of the empire.

Cæsar wrote two books in opposition to Cicero's Laus Catonis, in which Cato Uticensis had been celebrated with all the warmth of panegyric. Cæsar considered the praise of Cato as a reflection on himself, and published his answer in two orations, to which he gave the name, Anti-Catones.

The speeches were in the form of accusations before a judge; and, I believe, they were conducted with temper, for Cæsar praises Cato in the midst of his invective. He was too much master of his temper to suffer it to be indecently disturbed by critical controversy, and he was sufficiently politic to know, that to deny a merit which was become notorious, would injure the cause of which he had undertaken the defence.

One of the principal topics of Cæsar's satire was Cato's ebriety. But he relates an anecdote of it which

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redounds to the honour of Cato's general character. Cato returning one morning from a convivial meeting, in a state of inebriation, was met by some young men, who were determined to see whom they had encountered. They uncovered his face, and found it Cato. They no sooner saw him than they blushed on their own account, for having taken such a liberty with so great a man. You would have imagined that they had been detected in an improper state by Cato, and not Cato by them; so great was their confusion: and hence it is evident, that in the midst of drunkenness, Cato's character was respectable, and retained the dignity of superior virtue. Cæsar could not have paid Cato a greater compliment, or allowed him more personal authority, than by relating this story, in which Cato, even when divested of his reason by excess, was yet an awful character.

I imagine Cæsar, in the liberality and urbanity of a cultivated mind, conducted this controversy in a good-humoured manner, and rather more for the pleasure and amusement of it, than from a resentful desire to detract from Cato, whom his enemies allowed to be a good man and a good citizen. Every one knows that he was fond of wine; and, Horace seems to think that his virtue, by which is meant his manly spirit, acquired warmth from the juice of the grape.

> Narratur et prisci Catonis
> Sæpe mero caluisse virtus.

The effect of Cæsar's knowledge in astronomy is felt at this hour, in the reformation of the Calendar. Cæsar is represented in Lucan, as saying of himself,

> ——— media inter prælia semper
> Stellarum cœlique plagis superisque vacavi.

He was a lover of the science, and excelled in it; but there is reason to believe, that, in the Julian Calendar,

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he was assisted or directed by Sosigenes, the astronomer, who had derived his knowledge from the banks of the Nile. It is probable that superstition, and not ignorance only, prevented the reformation from taking place, before Cæsar gave it the sanction of his authority, and received in return, the whole honour of the invention.

Cæsar's Commentaries are too well known to admit of much animadversion upon them. They are evidently formed on the model of Xenophon's Anabasis. Their language is pure, and flows with that ease and perspicuity, which has induced readers unanimously to compare it to a gentle and beautiful river, whose surface is smooth, and waters pellucid. They who lament the want of political observations in them, and of masterly strokes of animated eloquence, should remember, that Cæsar professed only to write commentaries, and not a just and legitimate* history.

There is not much remaining of this great man's composition†; but there is enough to induce us to lament that he did not use the pen more than the sword. Poggius maintains, with great force of argument, that in military merit, his first object, he was greatly inferior to Scipio.

Pliny the elder seems to think vigour of mind the distinguishing character of Cæsar. He means not firmness and resolution only; but a peculiar celerity and irresistable force, which can be compared to nothing more aptly than to fire. He could, at the

* *Justam legitimamque* historiam: a classical mode of expression; but naturalized by Bishop Warburton and Bishop Hurd.

† Besides those already mentioned, Cæsar wrote the following works, which are lost.—Nine capital Orations, besides some smaller ones, on particular occasions; several books of Epistles, at least sixteen; *Libri Auspiciorum, Auguralia*; and some affirm that he translated Aratus's Phænomena. Other things are attributed to him, but, it is supposed, erroneously.

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same time, read and write, and listen with attention. He has been known to dictate to his amanuenses six or seven letters at once. Who but must lament that ambition stole him from the Muses? He might have spent all his fire, and acquired immortal fame, in composing an epic poem, or the history of his country, without shedding a drop of blood, or breaking one widow's or orphan's heart; and with the praise and delight of all posterity.

EVENING LI.

ON THE ÆSOPIAN FABLES AS A SCHOOL-BOOK FOR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN.

I THINK it may admit of a doubt, whether the presenting of the common fables, which are called Æsopian, to infant minds, is the most eligible mode of communicating those first ideas, which are said to be of the greatest consequence, and of the longest duration.

I object not to the moral, which is excellent, if the child could find it out: but the child thinks of nothing but the narrative, and perhaps, in the childish age, ought to think of nothing else. What has the infant of six or seven years to do with the cunning maxims of the world? The great business is, at that time, to open the mind in the pleasantest manner, by representing agreeable images, and by exciting and gratifying curiosity.

The images of animals, dogs, horses, bulls, peacocks, are very agreeable to children; and as fables exhibit such images, they are so far proper for their elementary instruction. But the objection is to that shocking violation of truth and nature, which represents the irrational and mute creation reasoning and conversing by articulate language.

Children naturally love truth, and when they read a

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story, their first question is, whether it is true? If they find it true, they are pleased with it; if not, they value it but little, and it soon becomes insipid. But they either immediately know that a story, in which a dog or a horse is represented speaking, is false; or if they believe it true, it contradicts their experience, and confounds all their ideas, so that they hardly know how to trust the evidence of their senses.

The reasoning and conversation of irrational animals raise them to a level with the human species; and if children are to respect reason and speech as most excellent gifts, they will, in their imaginations, honour the cock, the wolf, and the fox, as much as man, or else degrade man to the rank of the cock, the wolf, and the fox.

Is zoology a valuable part of knowledge, and confessedly useful and pleasing to children? Then why mislead them in their first ideas of animals around them, by attributing to animals not only speech and reason, but a thousand actions, instincts, and contrivances, totally different from those which are natural?

While I am writing, I open Croxall, and I see a print of a cat hanging by the hinder legs, on a peg, and pretending to be dead, in order to entice the mice to come down. A child of strong sense will say, How could a cat tie her hinder legs together in such a manner as to hang herself up as represented? and have cats such refined subtilty? I mention this instance out of a hundred others, merely because I accidently open the book at that fable. As the cat is an animal with which children are in general well acquainted, any unnatural representation of it, will immediately be detected and despised.

The style and language of all the Æsopian fables now in use, is generally above the comprehension of those by whom alone they are read. Croxall's is at

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the same time a very mean style. Dodsley's indeed, is a far better; but, in search of fine language, he has deviated greatly from simplicity, and rendered his fables unintelligible to those for whom they are chiefly designed.

L'Estrange's vulgarity, indelicacy, and foolish politics, deservedly condemn his book to oblivion. His book is nauseously vulgar, and fit only for the jakes. I cannot admire either his or Croxall's applications. They are, indeed, seldom read by children, and serve only to swell the volumes. They are too long, and too badly written, to serve for the instruction of young scholars. Two or three lines of application, in the manner of Phædrus, would have answered the purpose much better.

As to the propriety of Croxall's language, that I may not be thought to chuse the worst specimens, I will quote three or four lines of his first fable, and leave it to the reader to judge how well it is adapted to children.

"A brisk young cock," says he, "in company with two or three pullets, his mistresses, raking upon a dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a jewel. He knew what it was well enough," &c. I say nothing of the absurdity of giving children an idea that a cock "knows what a jewel is well enough." I only animadvert on the ordinary mode of expression. It aims at humour without reaching it; and is totally destitute of that elegant simplicity, in which a narrative of this kind should be presented to children. It were easy to fill a volume with the vulgarisms and absurdities of Croxall's Æsopian fables.

But yet, for want of a better, this book, with the help of the wooden cuts, has served to entertain children. All I contend for is, that it is not adapted to

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the use of children by the author, neither is it, in itself, fit for them. It is at once too high and too low for their purpose.

Are Gay's fit for children? Not for very young ones. They are far above their comprehension. They are not entirely intelligible to children under twelve or fourteen, unless in rare cases of premature improvement and sagacity. But some book is wanted that shall be in general calculated for all children at that period, when the mind, like the rosebud, is half closed and half expanded.

Fables are proper; but what fables? Only those among the Æsopian, in which the animals do not speak, and do not act inconsistently with their nature.

But by fables, I mean, what the word properly means, stories in general, and not those of Æsop only. Those of Æsop, after all that has been said on the propriety of children's reading them, are fitter for men than children, and were originally addressed to men on momentous occasions. They are seldom read by children, so as to afford the very sage and important instruction which their inventors intended to convey in this artful and insinuating mode.

I recommend fables of another kind, for the purpose of initiation; that is, tales, which paint pictures in the imagination, affect the heart, excite laughter, or powerfully interest and indulge curiosity.

If it should be asked, Where such are to be found; I cannot immediately answer: but I can say, without hesitation, who could compose them with judgment and genius. The reader will conjecture that I mean that lady who published some admirable Lessons and Hymns for Children*. Almost every word in those books is judiciously selected, and they are so enter-

* Mrs. Trimmer's and Mr. Day's books have also a great deal of merit in this way.

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taining, that children read without considering them as a task, just as they should do; the delight beguiling the labour.

Studio fallente laborem.—Hor.

A volume of fables by that lady, consisting of the best and most rational of the Æsopian, and of other entertaining narratives, whether with a moral expressed or not, would be a most valuable present to the rising generation. One would almost wish for infancy again, for the pleasure of reading it, and escaping dull lessons in spelling-books, dull fables in Croxall, and a hundred other dismal and dreary moralities, which have little other tendency than to make the young mind loath the sight of a book, and hate those things which, properly managed, afford an exquisite delight, by painting to the imagination and gratifying curiosity.

EVENING LII.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Ingenii largitor venter.

The old saying *vexatio dat intellectum*, I am sorry to observe, seems to have received some confirmation from the instances of many ingenious men worthy of a better fate. To the distresses which poets have felt, are often attributed the finest of their poems; but, perhaps, it may be justly urged, that their industry, and not their abilities, was increased or excited by distress. This indeed is partly true, but not entirely. They must have had abilities inherent in them, or they could not have been excited; according to that vulgar observation, that it is impossible to get blood out of a stone: but at the same time, there is every reason to believe that their abilities were actually improved by that thoughtfulness and attention which distress has a tendency to produce.

And yet, with respect to poetry, a diversity of opinions prevail on the effects of distress: for while the

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author in my motto says, that hunger gives ingenuity, another informs us, that the mind must be free from anxiety in order to make good verses, nor be troubled with the care of procuring a blanket. Horace is full of wine and dainties when he calls on the name of Bacchus with all the frantic enthusiasm of poetry*.

I am afraid Juvenal, who is rather given to declamation, asserted this doctrine without a due attention to actual experience: for in his time, as well as ours, poverty seems to have had a favourable influence on poetry. Many instances may be produced of this truth in the annals of modern literati; and I believe we may add to the number the name of Oliver Goldsmith.

From his want of attention to that economy which dunces often pay, and are very happy in consequence of it, he spent his life in penury. But his mind was rich, and dispensed a portion of its opulence to provide sustenance for its partner. To his distresses the literary world is indebted for a few very fine compositions. In the school of affliction he learned to feel, or at least to exercise those feelings which his writings express with so much sensibility. His genius was called forth by want; and when once he began to feel his strength, he relied on it for support. He who writes for support, will often write when necessity urges, rather than when genius impels, and the consequence will be a great inequality.

Goldsmith, though a good writer in prose, appears to me to owe his most solid reputation to poetry.

Edwin and Angelina is one of the most popular pieces in the language; perhaps it stands next in the favour of the people to Gray's delightful Elegy. Its general reception proves that its beauties are generally

* Anxietate carens animus versus facit, omnis acerbi
Impatiens, nec de lodice parandâ
Sollicitus; satur est cum dicit Horatius, Euœ.—JUVENAL.

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felt, and need not be pointed out by the subtle remarks of critical refinement. The language and sentiments are delicate. The sentiments came from a tender heart, and the language was dictated by a most elegant taste. Who but must lament that he who felt so tenderly, and wrote so sweetly, often wanted a shilling to provide him with his daily bread. I knew him intimately in my early life, and can affirm that he was compassionate to every child in misfortune, and generous beyond the rules of prudence.

> For to the houseless child of want
> His door was open still,
> And, though his portion was but scant,
> He gave it with good will.

In the Traveller he adopts a different style of poetry; but in the strong and nervous language of a Dryden, a Tickel, or of an Addison (in his letter to Lord Hallifax,) he exhibits the same fine vein of exquisite sensibility.

The first ten lines constitute a poetical paragraph not often exceeded in magnificence of style and tenderness of affection, by any verses in the English language; and the subsequent passages are seldom inferior in strength, and often exceed it in imagery. The whole breathes a manly spirit, and a love of human nature, of liberty, and of his country. It is one of those poems which, among the numbers which daily sink in the gulph of oblivion, will glide along the stream of time to late posterity. It is formed to be placed in the rank of classics, because it addresses at once the bosom and the fancy. Such feelings are raised by it, as must please always and universally; and this is indeed the effect of all the works which live and flourish in ages distant from their production, when the arts of conciliating favour and exciting attention, and when partiality and personal interest operate no more.

Next in reputation to the Traveller, stands his

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Deserted Village. The subject did not require so nervous a style as the Traveller; but it required sweetness, tenderness, simplicity; and in these most delightful graces it richly abounds. The poet every where displays in it a zeal for the happiness of mankind in the lower ranks of society, and a detestation of that pride, vice, and luxury, and of those deviations from nature and primitive simplicity, which enormous opulence contributes to introduce.

The versification has in it something original. It is excellently adapted to the subject, though it is unlike that of Pope, Dryden, or any predecessor. There is something in its flow remarkably pathetic. It came from the heart; and the imagination only added the beautiful tinges of poetical colouring.

The public who, in a length of time, are always found to decide with solidity of judgment, though often too hasty in their first applause, have selected all the more striking passages of the poem, and almost committed them to memory. The village preacher, the village schoolmaster, and the village alehouse, are drawn with affection, and have recommended themselves to the attention of every sympathizing reader.

I have known fastidious critics of reputed learning, who pretended that they could see no superior excellence in these poems, and suggested that the popularity of a poem was in their minds a suspicious circumstance, and led them to conclude, *primâ facie*, that it was of little intrinsic value. But it may be fairly concluded that such persons, actuated by envy, undervalue what they have been unable to obtain; and, like the fox in the fable, stigmatize, as unworthy their endeavours, the grapes which they cannot reach.

Men of logical and mathematical heads are apt to view a poem principally with an eye to its plan, to the mechanical circumstances of method, and the regular disposition of the component parts; but such persons

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have indeed no juster idea of real beauty in a poem, than a common stonemason or bricklayer, who works by rule and line, of magnificence and grace in a fine piece of architecture.

A poem is indeed the more perfect, the more regular its plan; but there are graces beyond the reach of art, and these will fully compensate, when they abound, for the want of mechanical regularity. Horace says, in the style of critical legislation,

Dulcia sunto.

Let poems give pleasure and they will be read, while critics rail unheard or unregarded.

Goldsmith was buried in Poet's Corner, and he is chiefly to be considered as a poet; for though his prose is animated, and contains many fine images expressed in vivid language, yet it is incorrect and unequal, the hasty production of necessity working against inclination.

His Citizen of the World has, with many good papers, many absurd ones, and many written in a careless manner. It will never hold a distinguished place in a select library.

Some of his Essays are beautiful. There is a delicacy of phrase, and a tenderness of affection in many of them, and the author has attempted humour on several subjects with success; but here also is something of inequality, incorrectness, and absurdity.

As a dramatist, his genius verged to the farcical. His Vicar of Wakefield I think the best of his prosaic writings. It speaks to the heart, and causes such an interest, as leads the understanding to connive at a very great degree of improbability.

The Histories of Greece, Rome, and England, are merely compilations, hastily finished for the temporary supply of money; and though they are not without animated passages, cannot be raised higher in the scale of literature than the rank of school books.

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Goldsmith had a great taste for natural history, and wished, as I heard him say, to write something in the manner of the elder Pliny. But he had not a sufficient share of science to qualify him for the performance. In his Animated Nature, he therefore had recourse to compiling, and, I believe, descended to mere translation. What he wrote himself displays his genius to advantage, but not his accuracy; and, upon the whole, he appears to have been more solicitous to write an entertaining than a solid book. It may please and improve schoolboys and superficial readers; but scholars and philosophers will rather chuse to draw from the fountains which supplied his stream; a stream which, it must be confessed, in the present case, often runs like a shallow rivulet.

Want made him write much, and rather on subjects suggested by his paymasters than by the unbiassed feelings of his own genius. The lumber of the compilations will sink in the gulph of oblivion; but the poems will glide on to posterity. Their style and pathos have been well imitated by Mr. Crabbe in his Village; nor is the loss of a Goldsmith's descriptive and sentimental strain unsupplied by Cowper.

EVENING LIII.

ON SOME REMARKABLE LATIN EPIGRAMS.

I was lately reading an impassioned copy of verses in an epigrammatist, celebrated in his time, one Bernardus Bauhusius, and could not help being struck with the impropriety of its conclusion. After the tenderest exclamation it ends in a pun. The subject is *Ecce homo,* one too serious to admit of witticism; and I believe the writer, in attempting wit upon it, complied with the taste of the times without the least intention to be unbecomingly jocular.

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Ecce meus Jesus pro me, livorque, cruorque,
Er tabum, et sanies! Ecce homo, nullus homo!
Ecce homo, qui pro me!——sed flendum est——currite, ocelli,
In duo flumina, mi lumina, liquimini.
Ite, piæ guttæ, pallentes currite rivis,
Grandibus, indomitis, tabificis lachrymis.
Quid? nondum ulla venit? cessatis, lumina? saltem
Unica——saltem una, O guttula parva, veni.
Me miserum! non ulla venit, non prosilit ulla!
O pie Christe, quis est, quem, tu *adamas?* adamas.

I add a few epigrams, from the same author, who is now little known, for the entertainment of the classical reader. The following is on the three grand enemies of man, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, imitated, I think, by Parnell:

TRES HOMINIS HOSTES.

Unum grammaticum, logicumque et rhetora vita:
Hos modò vitâris, cetera tuta tibi.
Quis rhetor?—*Mundus*;—fallax logicus?—*Cacodæmon*;
Semper declinans, est *Caro*, grammaticus.

The following is a part of an epigram on the bed of the new-born infant Jesus, and a curious specimen of the taste of the times. The poet laments the coldness of the bed.

IN LECTULUM DULCISSIMI INFANTIS JESU RECENS NATI.

Conde sinistellam, dextellam, *Jesule*, conde.
Conde, puelle, aures, conde, puelle, caput.
Oscula, parvule, conde, labella, tenerrima conde,
Hoe tege lumen et hoc, hoc tege tempus et hoc.
O ego, mi Jesu, tuus O! si lectulus essem,
Te, te ego, vel fuso sanguine, calfacerem.
Sic ego; sed contra mater: "non *sanguine* gaudet
Illè meus dulcis, melleus ille meus;
Poscit *aquam*"—jam nunc dabimus, dulcissime virgo,
An multam? "multam"—num gelidam?—"calidam?"
Num dulcem? "salsam:"—de flumine?—"lumine"—fonte?
"Fronte"—Ohe satis est, jam dabo, virgo, dabo."

Who is not ready to say with the poet, *Ohe satis est?*

He thus concludes an epitaph on Arias Montanus, the celebrated linguist. After enumerating almost all the known languages, in which he says Montanus was completely skilled, he adds well enough,

Angelicam optavit linguam quoque discere; Christus
Audiit, angelicum sustulit inquè chorum.

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But the grand effort of genius, on which the poet values himself not a little, is the following. It has been noticed in the Spectator. He calls it a verse making one book, and a book consisting of one verse. But I will give it and its title in the poet's own words:

"Divæ, optimæ, maximæque matri virgini Mariæ admirabilem hunc *Unius libri versum, unius versum librum,* Christianum Proteum, tot ora scilicet quot cœlum sydera gerentem (verti enim potest millies, bies et vicies, sensu salvo et heroici carminis lege) nostri in cœli reginam affectus monumentum hoc ponimus sempiternum:

Tot tibi sunt dites, virgo, quot sidera cœlo.

"In eodum hoc Proteo retrogrados versus pœne centum est invenire."

Another, which he thinks a superior effort, follows:

"Deo optimo maximo, æterno Dei filio Christo Jesu mundi servatori *Proteus* e variis sacrarum literarum locis depromptus, priori longe admirabilior, nam sensu salvo, et heroici carminis lege, verti potest 3,628,800, scilicet tricies, sexies, centies, millies vicies octies millies et octingenties."

Rex, dux, sol, lex, lux, fons, spes, pax, mons, petra, CHRISTUS.

What a laborious calculation for a poet!

In a florid epigram, of some length, he gives his heart to Christ, and exhorts the sons of men to do likewise, concluding thus:

Corda data.—O qui dat, quam sine corde sapit!

Of St. Stephen, who rejoiced while he was stoned, he says,

Siccinè amat lapides?—sic certè—nonne *Corona**
Ornari multo pulchra velit lapide.

His epigrammic remark on the physician, is not in a bad taste:

* i. e. Στεφανος.

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Res misera medicus est, cui nunquam bené est
Nisi malé sit quam plurimis.

In his aspirations after the heavenly flame, he exclaims,

O amor! O desiderium! mea fax, meus ignis
Cur me sic uris? cur?——quia tam *procul es.*

The beggar's speech is striking:

De Deo loquor libenter, non libenter audio.

His hint to a sturdy beggar deserves attention, from the mendicant order;

Mosce, quid æra petis? vili quid de stipe vivis?
Alcidæ nervos, ossa Milonis habes.
Vah pudeat!—sum pauper, ais; mentire; supersunt
En bini census, dextra, sinistra, tibi.

The following, written under a half-length figure, contains a fine compliment:

Dimidium pinxit quæ dextera *Borromæum.*
Norât quod totum pingere nemo potest.

Another good epitaph on Arias Montanus:

Hoc *Syrus* in tumulo est, *Hebræus, Graius,* et *Auson*
Verus item, non teter et ustus, *Arabs.*
"Quinque homines," inquis?—ne, lector, fallere; namque
Graius, is et Latius, qui Syrus ille et Arabs,
Hebræusque, *idem* est: nempé hic est magnus *Arias,*
Qui, *patriâ, unus* homo; *quinque* sed, *ore,* fuit.

The use of religious love and fear:

Ut fugiam scelus omne, et amem super omnia numen,
Da mihi fræna, timor, da mihi calcar, amor.

But I will add no more, lest I weary the reader, whom I wish, for a moment, to amuse.

Bernardus Bauhusius, like many of the sons of Loyola, possessed learning and ingenuity, and the absurdities of his manner are to be attributed to the erroneous taste of his age. There are some kinds of false wit as entertaining from their absurdity as the true. It is the *mediocris poeta,* the middling poet, the insipid race who want sense to be right, and the spirit to be wrong, whom Horace means when he says, neither gods nor men, nor the booksellers shops can tolerate them. It would be injustice to Bauhusius not to allow that he

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has many elegant lines and phrases, and some epigrams in the truly classical taste, with sense and beauty in the beginning and middle, and with point at the end.

I will dismiss this subject with the poet's own apology.

POETA AD MUSAM SUAM.

Serpere te momi dicunt, nimiumque jacere
Increpat et soccos ille vel ille tuos.
Ne tamen hoc teneras urat tibi, Musa, medullas,
Serpunt et violæ et dulcia fragra *jacent*.

The modern Latin poets, though at present neglected, were much read, and often imitated by Pope, Addison, Parnell, and most of the wits of their age.

EVENING LIV.

ON THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF PROMOTING SELF-COMPLACENCY.

There is a kind of self-complacency which arises solely from excessive self-conceit. A person under the influence of this foible imagines every thing which he says or does excellent, and every thing that belongs to him superior to the very same thing in the possession of his neighbour. According to the common adage, his geese are all swans. This quality renders a man completely ridiculous, and is indeed utterly inconsistent with good sense and the obvious suggestions of common experience.

But there is also another kind of self-complacency, which is founded on solid and virtuous principles, and is the cause of one of the most substantial satisfactions which human nature can enjoy. I mean to enumerate a few of the means which have a natural tendency to produce it.

The offices of Christian piety are attended with pleasure of a species no less durable than exalted. It was this which induced Erasmus to declare in a serious sense, that there are no greater Epicures than pious Christians. What can contribute more to pleasure

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than the consequence of piety, the calm serenity of reliance and resignation?

To please one's-self, such is the happy constitution of things, nothing contributes more effectually than the communication of innocent pleasure to others. I say innocent pleasure; for it is the nature of guilt to add a bitter infusion to the sweetest cup of human delight.

Acts of pure Christian charity, unmixed with ostentation, leave a relish behind them which few gratifications equal or resemble. I have no doubt but that the internal sensations of a truly charitable man, after having unostentatiously relieved a person in great and urgent distress, are more pleasurable than those of the most celebrated conqueror: and I imagine the good Samaritan and Mr. Hanway enjoyed greater delight than was usually experienced by Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Charles the Twelfth, Frederic King of Prussia, or Lord Clive. The blood seems to run more smoothly in its channels after a benevolent action; so that the delight of it, while perfectly pure, may at the same time be denominated a sensual pleasure. It is a delight also which may be recalled at will, and it affords peculiar solace under sickness and affliction.

As the state of man is progressive, Providence has been pleased to ordain that the steps of his improvement should be attended with complacency. Whether the improvement is moral or mental, the pleasure is great which accompanies it. A man feels himself rising in value by every new acquisition of good qualities. To be advancing more and more, by daily approaches, to attainable perfection, is a state so pleasant, that it may be said to resemble the ascent up a beautiful hill, where the prospect over variegated meadows, meandering streams, forests, distant roofs and spires, becomes at every step more delightful.

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Industry in laudable pursuits is a never-failing source of internal satisfaction. It causes a pleasing succession of ideas, by bringing new objects, or a change of circumstances, continually in view. And if it is conversant with matters of importance, and attended with success, there is no state so happy as that of an industrious man in the exercise of his skill and abilities.

To have subdued an irregular or excessive passion, and to have resisted a mean, a vicious, a degrading inclination, affords a pleasing consciousness of virtuous resolution; a sensation so agreeable and flattering, as could not have been equalled by indulgence or compliance with it; and has this additional advantage, that it is not followed by pain, remorse, or any consequences which can occasion shame or sorrow. On the contrary, after the gratification of vice or irregularity, a man feels himself little and low; he despises himself, and recovers not his happiness till, by contrition or amendment, he regains a due degree of self-esteem.

No bad man, says the heathen poet, is a happy man. *Nemo malus felix.** He is perhaps for ever in pursuit of enjoyment; but he feels agitations and anxieties that detract much from his pleasures; and his reflections upon them, and their consequences to himself, his family, and many others, become, at least in the solitary hours of dejection, ill-health, or of night alone, extremely uneasy. So that it is not merely the declamation of a preacher, but the decision of experience arising from actual fact, which pronounces that a good conscience is necessary to the true enjoyment of life.

No man can have a conscience perfectly void of offence; but whoever has violated it reluctantly, and repented as often as he has transgressed, may be said to have a good conscience; and a treasure it is more to be desired than the golden stores continually brought

* Juvenal.

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from the East, by men, whom Providence suffers to become enormously rich, to shew that enormous riches are no decisive marks of its peculiar favour.

How sweet the slumbers of him who can lie down on his pillow and review the transactions of every day without condemning himself! A good conscience is the finest opiate. The Materia Medica cannot supply one half so efficacious and pleasant; and all the nabobs together, if they were to unite their fortunes in contribution, could not purchase a similar one.

Good health, preserved by temperance and regularity gives a sweetness to life, a pleasantness of feeling which no civil honours or secular prosperity can bestow.

Prudential economy in the management of expences, and the confining of them to the certain income, so as not to be incumbered with debt, or distressed by the invention of ways and means to raise supplies for the current year, exempt from ten thousand painful solicitudes, and give an ease and calmness of spirits unknown to the most opulent who possess not this caution; a caution equally required by prudence and common honesty. To see, in consequence of it, a family rising to independence, not likely to be exposed to the scorn and ill usage of the world, affords a comfort more satisfactory than the fugacious pleasures of ostentatious extravagance.

Self-esteem, founded on rational principles, is one of the first requisites to a happy life; and to the honour of virtue and religion, let it be remarked, that it is attainable only by a benevolent, a wise, a prudent conduct. Men who, by early education, by happily falling among good examples, by reading good books, and by forming good habits in consequence of all these advantages, conduct themselves in all things with reason, with moderation, and with kindness;—these are they, who, after all the pretensions of voluptuousness, enjoy

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the most of this world; for their happiness flows like a gentle stream uninterrupted in its course, uniform and constant, while that of others is like a torrent, which dashes from rock to rock, all foam, all noise for a little while, till it is lost in the ocean, or wasted away by its own violence. It is destructive of others, destructive of itself, and too turbulent to admit of pure tranquillity.

Let those who have wandered in pursuits which themselves are ready to acknowledge delusive and unsatisfactory, resolve by way of experiment, to try whether the pleasure of that self esteem which arises from rectitude of conduct, is not the most pleasing possession which this world affords; whether it does not promote a constant cheerfulness and gaiety of heart, which renders life a continual feast. The path of duty, comparatively speaking, is strewed with flowers and sweetened with fragrance. To the timid, the slothful, and ill-disposed, the first entrance may appear to be closed with briars; but he who has courage to break through the difficulties raised by his own imagination, will find himself in as pleasant a walk as is to be found beneath the moon. But I will not draw a deceitful picture with the colours of rhetoric. Much uneasiness and some sorrow must be the lot of every man in his present state; I only contend that the pleasantness of wisdom and virtue is not fictitious, and that he who faithfully adheres to them will, upon the whole, enjoy all the delight of which his nature and his situation render him capable.

Many philosophers maintain that selfishness is the spring of all our activity. Whether their system is well founded or not, it is certain that in pursuit of the pleasure of rational self-esteem, we may be as selfish as we please without incurring the disgrace of meanness; for to the indulgence of this kind of selfish-

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ness it is necessary to cultivate every thing liberal, generous, useful, amiable. The pleasure arising from it is not unsocial, thought it centres in self; for it is not to be enjoyed but by promoting the good of society. The pleasure is the first reward which Providence has vouchsafed to assign to the honest efforts of humble virtue, a reward infinitely disproportionate to that reserved for it in a better tate, but still of a pure, of a celestial nature, and great enough to excite the most ardent efforts in its acquisition.

What happiness can subsist without this essential ingredient, self-complacency? External circumstances are of no value without it. The gold loses its lustre, and the purple its glossy dye, without it. Titles, rank, power, property, the grand idols of a prostrate world, are deceitful and empty whenever the delicious tranquillity of a mind soothed to rational complacency is a stranger to the bosom.

There is this additional advantage in being pleased with one's self, on solid reasons, that it puts one in good humour with the world. All nature seems to smile with us; and our hearts, dilating with conscious virtue and benevolence, feel a new delight in the communication of happiness.

EVENING LV.

ON THE AFFECTATION OF EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY.

Belinda was always remarkably fond of pathetic novels, tragedies, and elegies. Sterne's sentimental beauties were her peculiar favourites. She had indeed contracted so great a tenderness of sensibility from such reading, that she often carried the amiable weakness into common life, and would weep and sigh as if her heart were breaking at occurrences which others, by no means deficient in humanity, viewed with indifference. She could not bear the idea of killing animals

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for food. She detested the sports of fishing and hunting, because of their ineffable cruelty. She was ready to faint if her coachman whipt his horses when they would not draw up hill; and she actually fell down in a fit on a gentleman's treading on her favourite cat's tail as he eagerly stooped to save her child from falling into the fire.

Being rather of a romantic turn, she would frequently utter sentimental soliloquies on benevolence and humanity; and when any catastrophe of a pathetic nature occurred, she generally gave vent to her feelings by writing a lamentation. I procured from one of her friends the following piece, with liberty to present it to the public eye.

Belinda, it seems, was at her toilette, adorning her tresses, when an animalcule of no great repute in the world, and who often obtrudes where he is not welcome, fell from her beautiful tresses on her neck. In the first emotions of her surprise and anger she seized the little wretch, and crushed it between her nails, till it expired with a sound

Δουπησεν δε πεσων,

as Homer expresses the exit of his heroes.

The noise and the sight of the viscera soon recalled her sensibility, and she thus expressed it:

"Thou poor partaker of vitality, farewell. Life undoubtedly was sweet to thee, and I have hastily deprived thee of it. But surely the world was wide enough for thee and me. And it was ungenerous to murder one who sought an asylum under my fostering protection.

"Because thou art minute we are inclined to suppose thee insensible. But doubtless thou hadst nerves and delicate sensations proportioned to the fineness of thy organs. Perhaps thou hadst a partner of thine affections and a numerous progeny, whom thou sawest

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rising to maturity with parental delight, and who are now left destitute of a protector in their helpless infancy.

"Thy pain is indeed at an end; but I cannot help deploring the unfeeling cruelty of those who deprive the smallest reptile, to whom nature has given breath, of that life which, though it appears contemptible in the eyes of the thoughtless, yet is sweet to the meanest animal—was sweet to thee, thou poor departed animalcule! Alas, that I must now say was sweet to thee! Did I possess the power of resuscitation I would reanimate thy lifeless corpse, and cherish thee in the warmest corner of thy favourite dwelling-place. —But adieu for ever; for my wish is vain. Yet if thy shade is still conscious, and hovers over the head it once inhabited, pardon a hasty act of violence, which I endeavour to expiate with the tear of sympathy and the sigh of sensibility."

Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

I am informed that the drawer of her writing-table is full of elegies and elegiac sonnets on rats and mice caught in traps, and of tom-tits and robin-redbreasts killed by school-boys. I remember to have heard a most pathetic elegy recited on the death of a redbreast, much in Belinda's style, but I can only recollect one pathetic Erotesis: "Who killed Cock Robin?"

There is also a sublime deification of an earth-grub which she once accidentally trod upon as she was endeavouring to rescue a fly from a spider in the garden. It concludes thus:

But cease to weep—no more to crawl
In the dank earth beneath yon wall,
On snow-white pinions thou shalt rise,
And claim thy place in yonder skies:

BELINDA'S EFFUSIONS OF SENTIMENT.

Efts, toads, bats, every thing that hath life, has a claim to her tenderest compassion. And certainly her

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tenderness to them does her honour; but the excessive sensibility which their slightest sufferings seem to occasion, gives room to suspect that she is not without affectation. What is so singular and excessive can scarcely be natural.

Having heard and observed so much of her delicate feelings for the irrational creation, I was naturally led to make inquiries concerning her behaviour in the more interesting attachments of social life. I expected to find that—she, of course,

> Like the needle true,
> Turn'd at the touch of joy or woe,
> And turning, trembled too.

The following is the result of my investigation. Her temper was so various and violent that her husband was often obliged to leave his home in search of peace. I heard he had just recovered from a fit of illness, during the whole of which she had seldom visited him, and shewn no solicitude. She had sat weeping over a novel on the very day on which his fever came to a crisis, and the physicians had declared his recovery dubious. On his recovery, he had gone a voyage to the East Indies, by her advice, for the improvement of his fortune. He took leave of her very affectionately; but she was dressing to go and see Mrs. Siddons in Calista, and could not possibly spend much time in a formal parting, which was a thing she above all things detested. But, let it be remembered, she duly fainted away in the boxes, on Mrs. Siddons' first entrance, before the actress had uttered a single syllable.

Two fine little boys were left under her care without control, during their father's absence. The little rogues had fine health and spirits, and would make a noise, which she could not bear, as she was busy in preparing to act a capital part in the Orphan, at a private theatre built by a man of fortune and fashion, for his own amusement. She determined

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therefore to send the brats to school. Indeed she declared in all companies she thought it the first of a mother's duties to take care that her children were well educated. She therefore sent them outside passengers by the stage coach, to an academy in Yorkshire, where she had stipulated that they should not come home in the holidays, and indeed not till their father arrived; for she was meditating a new tragedy, under the title of the Distressed Mother, or the Widowed Wife.

Though she did not appear to me very fond of her husband, who was a plain good man, without any fine feelings, and was displeased with her children, whose noise interrupted her studies, yet, I took it for granted, that she who spoke so feelingly of distress, of benevolence, of humanity, of charity, and who sympathised with the poor beetle that we tread upon, could not but be profusely beneficent to all her fellow-creatures in affliction who solicited her assistance; but I was here also greatly mistaken. A workman in stopping up her windows in consequence of the commutation tax, fell from a scaffold three stories high, and broke his leg. The passengers took him up, knocked at the door, and desired he might be admitted, till a surgeon could be sent for, but I heard her as I passed by declaring, in a voice that might be heard from the stair-case on which she stood, quite to the end of the street—" He shall not be brought here. We shall have a great deal of trouble with him. Take him to the hospital immediately; and shut the door, d'ye hear, John." The passengers, lest time should be lost, hurried the poor man to a neighbouring public house, where the honest landlord, with a pot of porter in his hand, and an unmeaning oath in his mouth, exclaimed, " Let him in?—aye, and welcome.—Here, Tom, see him laid on my own bed, and let him have

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every thing necessary; and if he never pays me its no great matter.—Come, here's to his getting well soon—Poor man!—I warrant now he has a wife and family that must starve till he gets about again—but they shan't neither—I'll mention it to our club—They are all hearty ones, I know, and will subscribe handsomely."

The truth was, that the man had a wife and family, as my landlord conjectured, and is commonly the case. I heard that he was soon afterwards carried to Belinda with a petition, drawn up very pathetically, by a person who never gave any thing himself, but the moving expressions. Belinda had given orders to the servants to say she was not at home if any body should call that week. For, indeed, she was exceedingly engaged in penning an elegy on the lap-dog who had died of a looseness; and had intended to finish her address to the Duchess on the hardships of the labouring poor.

I was satisfied with these inquiries, and began to lose my veneration for ladies and gentlemen of exquisite sensibility, of delicate feeling, and the most refined sentiment; believing firmly, that there is more good sense and true kindness in the plain motherly house-wife, who is not above her domestic duties, and in the honest man of common sense, than in the generality of pretenders to more benevolent sensations or finer feelings than belong to other people of equal age, rank, opulence, and education.

EVENING LVI.

ON THE NECESSITY OF DIGNIFYING PUBLIC OFFICERS AND MAGISTRATES BY PERSONAL MERIT AND A CORRESPONDING APPEARANCE.

The condition of human nature is so frail that it is almost ridiculous in any man to exhibit the appearance

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of grandeur and dignity. But there are persons who seem to possess a native weight of character which adds to their words authority, and to their actions force.

This endowment, whatever it is, was intended by Providence for the communication of good and the prevention of evil. Those who possess it seem to have a natural claim to command, to civil pre-eminence, to the honourable and important offices of the magistrate and the legislator.

But in the confusion of the present scene, riches usurp the authority which nature intended for her favourites; and it is common to observe persons invested with civil and official importance, whose natural insignificancy exposes their persons to contempt, and renders their offices ineffectual. A Lord Mayor of London, for instance, raised from a low origin by fortunate events in trade, destitute of education and natural dignity, degrades at once the office and himself by the advancement of which he was ambitious. He grows more conspicuous by elevation; and the meanness which would pass unnoticed, or might even be palliated in his natural station becomes, when he is invested with the gold chain and the scarlet robe, a solemn mockery of magistracy.

Much of the contumacy of the common people has, I think, arisen from the want of personal authority in the magistrates. In ignorant ages the mere robes and insignia of office might command respect; but in times when if few are profoundly, yet all are superficially learned, much more is required to secure a voluntary deference than the exaction of it by force, or the inviting of it by ostentation.

To secure respect, a mind must be visible; a mind furnished with knowledge and enlarged with liberality. Without disinterestedness no public character, however remarkably distinguished by talents, natural

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or acquired, can be long illustrious. Opinion or esteem is the foundation of authority; but how is opinion or esteem to be conciliated in favour of a man, who has bought his nominal honours, and knows not to act, to speak, or to think consistently with the elevated place to which his vanity has aspired.

If vanity did not usually close the ear to the voice of advice, I would venture to whisper to every candidate for public honours, that he will probably derive no real credit from them, if he is conscious that, he has not enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education. In private life, he may be very respectable as an honest man, and a good master of a family; but in public, he must be contemptible, without an elevation of sentiment corresponding with the elevation of his rank. I own that in some instances this elevation is visible where education has been defective. Strong parts and a long commerce with the world have supplied the defect; but these instances are not so common as to justify the generality of uneducated rich men in supposing that they are furnished by nature with talents, knowledge, and authority sufficient to qualify them for rule, for offices of public dignity and national importance. Genius has no peculiar claims either at the Royal Exchange or the Heralds' Office.

These reflections were suggested by the following letter:

SIR,

I am a foreigner and have spent a year or two in England, solely for the purpose of improving myself in a nation which is respected throughout Europe, as exhibiting a state of improvement and a generosity of sentiment, which reflect honour on human nature.

When I came to London I was ambitious of being introduced to the acquaintance of those who, I was told, were the principal magistrates; one of whom

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annually resided in the magnificent mansion of magistracy, and rode, as I often saw, with triumphal pomp in a gilded vehicle, through the streets of London. I found it by no means difficult to be introduced to a public feast, where I endeavoured to form an intimacy with the chief magistrate. I succeeded so far as to be invited to a private dinner with him, and a few of his brother aldermen, and members of the common council.

The entertainment was sumptuous and genteel. But conversation was my object, and I spared no pains to lead to such subjects as I thought might afford me the most valuable information. I mentioned several of those topics connected with English history, in which I had read that the city of London had a principal share; but my remarks caused only a vacant stare, and received no other reply than such as—" I do not know, Sir,—I really forget, Sir.—Give me leave to help you to a slice of ham, Sir." I thought my conversation might be ill-timed, and therefore said no more on the subject of history, but joined in the general topics of the day. Pardon me, Sir, but I could not help blushing for two or three gentlemen in gold chains, who expressed themselves ungrammatically and vulgarly on the commonest subjects. I am a foreigner, and therefore must not pretend to be a critic in your language and pronounciation; but I appeal to you whether: " Them there things—This here weal—My vife," are reconcilable either to grammar or the elegance of polite conversation.

I ought not to be censorious, nor am I disposed to deride; but I cannot help observing, that the magistrates appeared, from the general turn of conversation, to be far less well informed and less liberally minded than their stations require. If the merchants and gentlemen of the metropolis are not better accomplished than the magistrates of my acquaintance, I own I shall

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lose something of that respect for your nation which I entertained while I was at home.

I intend to write my travels; and if I were to give an accurate account of those of your principal persons in the corporation of London with whom I have associated, I fear I should affront a people to whom I owe gratitude. The dignified magistrates of the first city in the universe would appear to be on a level with our vulgar. I dare say, and indeed am well informed, that there are members of the court who are polite and well-informed gentlemen; but that too often pragmatical persons offer themselves for the scarlet robe, who ought to be contented with the leathern apron. I endeavour to view things as a philosopher and cosmopolite, and I cannot but think that the degradation of the magistracy must be injurious to the police, the morals, and the liberty of your country. Pardon my freedom, and believe me, Your's, &c.

A Swiss.

EVENING LVII.

ON SAYING GRACE AT TABLE.

——— Swinish Gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast.
Milton's Comus.

Reverentia mensæ. Juv.

Sir,

I am an old man, and have resided in a village above a hundred miles from London during the last forty years; but I was lately tempted, partly by curiosity and partly by business, to spend a month at Christmas with an old friend at the west end of the town. I was very much pleased with many improvements which I observed, and as I am not morose, I think I was not inclined to be querulous at any thing without cause. But there is one thing which gave me much offence, and I dare say you will allow it to be unjustifiable. I

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observed that the good old practice of begging a blessing on the refreshment of a dinner, and returning thanks for it to Him who is the author and giver of all good, was become unfashionable.

I have been laughed at more than once at some very elegant tables to which my friend introduced me, for standing up and expecting the master to say grace both before and after meat. I found it impossible to continue the practice at another man's house, with a whole circle around ready to stare with surprise, or laugh with scorn. I was therefore contented with a silent ejaculation; but though I conformed outwardly to the canons of fashion, I entered a secret protest against them, and beg leave through your means to make my protest public.

Give me leave to inform those polite gentlefolk, who have dropped the practice with an idea of its being superstitious, vulgar, puritanical, that a consecration of the table was observed religiously by the politest nations of antiquity.

The ancient Greeks esteemed the table Hieron Chrema, or a sacred thing; and Cleodemus, in Plutarch, calls it the Altar of Friendship and Hospitality.

They made the first offering to the gods, and called them απαρχαι, or first fruits; and at the conclusion of the feast, they poured out, to the Gods again, σπονδαὶ or λοιβαὶ, libations of wine.

They were unwilling to partake of the meal till a part of the provision had been offered to the gods, in order to sanctify the whole. Even Achilles whose impetuous spirit was not prone to the weakness of superstition, would not eat when the ambassadors of Agamemnon disturbed him at midnight, till he had ordered his friend to make the oblation.

Θεοῖσι δὲ θύσαι ἀνωγει
Πάτροκλον ὃν ἑταῖρον, ὁ δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε θυηλάς.

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Ulysses also, as Dr. Potter observes from Athenæus, when in the den of Polyphemus, did not neglect this duty of pious gratitude.

Ἐνθάδε τοῖ κλωπες ἐθύσαμεν, ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοι.
Τυρῶν αἰνύμενοι φάγομεν.

Dr. Potter adds, that "in the entertainments of Plato* and Xenophon we find oblations made; and to forbear the mention of more examples, the neglect of this duty was accounted a very great impiety, which none but Epicurus and those who worshipped no gods at all, would be guilty of," *apud Epicurum* οἱ σοφοὶ, καὶ ἀπαρχὰς τοῖς θεοῖς

I do not see any reason why those who, like Epicurus, refuse to honour God according to the dictates of natural gratitude, and the universal practice of the polished people of the world, should not be numbered among the disciples of Epicurus, and, without any violation of charity, be supposed to say in their hearts, there is no God.

I could produce a great number of examples from the classics to prove that the dinner was seldom enjoyed without some mode of consecration, even among those heathens to whom we are inclined to consider ourselves as greatly superior. And shall those who call themselves Christians neglect this instance of piety? Especially as Jesus Christ has given many examples of it in the Gospel, and the people to whom it pleased God peculiarly to reveal himself, practised it from the earliest antiquity. I mentioned the practice of the polite heathens in the first place, because I imagined this example would have the most weight with those who chiefly value themselves on politeness, of which they sometimes

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ δεῖπνον σπονδὰς τοῖς θεοῖς ποιοῦσι TON ΘΕΟΝ παρακαλοῦντες τοῖς παροῦσι μνημονεύειν. Athenæus, lib. 4. Casaub. page 179. See Bishop Butler's Charge subjoined to his Analogy: and the authors referred to by him. Cudworth on the Lord's Supper, p. 8. Casaubon in Athenæum, lib i. p. 11. Duport, Prælect. in Throphrastrum, ed. Needham, cap. 9, page 335.

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consider the neglect of the graces at table, as an honourable testimony. But I will now add some examples from the practice of the ancient Jews, which, in this particular, have as much politeness in them as those of the Greeks and Romans, and ought to have much greater authority in a Christian country.

The master of the family among the Jews* pronounced, as soon as the guests or the family were seated, a general admonition to prayers, and then proceeded to the consecration of the dinner. The whole company sung a hymn, which is extant in a book, entitled the Order of the Blessings and Psalms, and the master then said the following grace: "Blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the universe, who feedeth the world by his goodness, and by his grace and mercy giveth nourishment to all flesh; by whose bounty it cometh to pass that food never yet hath failed, neither will fail his creatures. It is he alone who giveth existence to all things, and preserveth them, and doth good to all, and giveth food to every being that he hath created. Blessed be thou, O Lord, who feedest all things."

He then consecrated the wine and bread in a form similar to the preceding. This longer process was, however, only observed at formal dinners, and on solemn occasions, a shorter being used on common days: and it is recorded that the master of the house said grace before meat, and one of the guests returned thanks. Perhaps it would be too great a refinement to suppose that the business of returning thanks for a dinner supplied at his expence, was declined by the master from motives of delicacy. Sometimes, however, the master returned thanks, and the company made a response. The master said, "Let us return thanks to God because we have eaten of the creatures which

* Vide Stuckii Antiquitates Conviv.

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belonged to him;" and the guests responded immediately, "Let God be praised, of whose blessings we have eaten, and by whose bounty we live."

The primitive Christians, imitating the example of the Jews, and more particularly of our Saviour, were strict in the performance of those pious duties which consecrated the table, and in returning thanks to God for the daily supply of necessary sustenance. Chrysostom frequently mentions the benediction of the table made use of by the Monks in Egypt. In the Horologium of the Greek church, the whole form of the benediction is thus described:

Before the dinner is placed upon the table, the hundred and forty-fifth psalm is read aloud, and it no sooner is served up, than the priest repeats, "O Christ, our God, bless our meat and drink; for thou art holy now and for evermore; Amen." And after having tasted it, they all rise up and say, "Blessed art thou, O God, who pitiest us and feedest us from our youth; thou who givest food to all flesh, fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that, being always satisfied, we may abound in every good work, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to thee, be glory, honour, power, and worship, together with the Holy Ghost. Amen." After dinner, the following is the form of thanksgiving: "Glory to thee thou holy one, Glory to thee, O King; since thou hast given us food to our comfort and joy, fill us also with the Holy Ghost, that we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and not ashamed when thou shalt render to every one according to his works." Then the hundred and twenty-second psalm is read; after which—"As thou wast present in the midst of thy disciples while at supper, O thou Saviour, giving them peace, so come also to us and save us." Then follows a part of the twenty-second psalm, beginning at "The poor shall eat and be filled, they shall praise

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the Lord who seek him." *Kyrie Eleison*, Lord have mercy upon us. The whole concludes with this little prayer: "Blessed be God who hath pitied and fed us with his rich gifts; may we enjoy his grace and loving kindness now and for evermore. Amen."

I imagine that the whole of this long grace was only used on extraordinary occasions; but there is no doubt but a part of it constituted the daily formulary of consecration before meals, and of gratitude after them.

Far be it from me to recommend a prolixity approaching to that of the Greek church, or to that of the college graces, as established by our pious ancestors, who, according to the complaints of the hungry scholars, used to insist on long graces, and at the same time give but short commons. I think long prayers on such occasions particularly unseasonable. But I have produced these examples to shew that the table has been considered by all people, from the earliest ages, as a sacred thing, and that they have ever thought it expedient to sanctify a meal by a previous consecration of the food, and a subsequent act of thanksgiving for the refreshment received. I infer, from the antiquity and universality of the practice, its propriety. It could not, I think, have been so ancient and almost universal, unless it had been also right and reasonable.

That it is right and reasonable, I believe many of those who neglect it will not seriously deny. But profligate men of fashion have set the example of omission, and they who are determined to follow the fashion in all its follies, think themselves obliged to omit a duty both easy and useful. They ought not, they allow, to suffer fashion to supersede duty and decency: but they assert, that, such is the power of this arbitrary tyrant, they "cannot what they ought." A bad excuse indeed, and such an one as will scarcely be accepted for an omission injurious to themselves, to

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their children, their servants, their neighbourhood, and to the cause of religion.

There is indeed something so brutally thoughtless and ungrateful in partaking of plenty and pleasure, in faring sumptuously every day, without feeling, or at least expressing gratitude, to the giver of all good gifts, that one would wonder how persons pretending to elegance and sentimental refinement, can possibly pardon themselves the impious omission. Indeed, however genteel they may appear, and however elegant their fashionable manners, yet while they sit down daily to their meals, like brutes that perish, they must be numbered among Horace's *Epicuri de grege porcos*, hogs of Epicurus's stye; and instead of soup in a China terrene, it would be a proper reproof to serve them up offal in a wooden trough.

Your's, &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

EVENING LVIII.

ON INJURING THE HEALTH IN ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE BEAUTY.

SIR,

UNDER a feigned name, or without a name, I can venture to divulge some errors and misfortunes which I should not chuse to acknowledge in my own person, lest my friends should deride me.

From the information of my looking-glass, and the praises of my friends, I was led to conclude at a very early age that I was beautiful. As it is natural to pay the first attention to that on which we chiefly value ourselves, I devoted much time and care to the contemplation and improvement of my face. The smallest pimple or redness gave me great uneasiness; but there was one blemish which almost broke my heart. One of my fore-teeth grew irregularly, and had at one corner the appearance of decay. This alone I imagined

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sufficient to counterbalance the effect of all my other graces. But as I read the pretensions of dentists in their advertisements, my mortification did not yet terminate in despair.

I applied to an operator, who confidently assured me that he could replace my tooth, by an art known only to himself, in such a position as to render my rows of ivory and pearls, as he was pleased to call them, perfectly unparalleled. I submitted to his hand, and he twisted a wire round my teeth, which for six weeks gave me exquisite torment; but the hope of removing the blemish afforded me solace under it. The pain, and the peculiar diet which I was ordered to pursue, brought on a fever which killed all the roses in my cheeks, and had nearly killed me. The wires were taken out, and my tooth remained nearly in the same situation.

As I had suffered so much in attempting to do violence to nature, I resolved to submit to her in future with patience; but the little appearance of decay, which I have hinted at before, became a black spot, and prognosticated, as the doctor said, an approaching caries. This was terrifying indeed! Any thing on earth was tolerable in comparison with a caries. Nay, I know not whether, in the agonies of my mind on the apprehensions of it, I should not have submitted cheerfully to death, rather than have lived with a black speck on a front tooth. But hope once more shone upon my bosom. A kind dentist restored my spirits, by declaring that he was possessed of an art which would prevent all bad consequences, and continue the beauty of my pearly ornaments, set between rubies (for so he expressed himself,) unsullied during life.

The remedy was transplantation. I submitted to extraction with a stocial heroism. A chimney-sweeper, who attended at my side, parted with his best tooth

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for a shilling, and it was planted, reeking with blood and warm with life, in the socket whence my odious tooth with the black speck had been just drawn. I was now in a state of exultation. I thought my gums might defy old age and decay, and gloried in the idea of having almost found out the art of rejuvenescence. My triumph was but transient. A tumour and inflammation ensued. The pain I suffered is not to be described; but I was still a heroine, animated with the idea that the pain was but for a short time, and that the happiness would be for life.

I became so ill as to be under the necessity of seeking medical advice. Shame prevented me from informing my physician of the cause of my illness. He was at a loss to account for it; but from the appearance was induced to prescribe large doses of mercury. The disease still continued, and I lost several of my teeth and a great part of my gums and palate. My lips were distorted, or corroded, in a frightful manner. The physician at last insisted on the necessity of my undergoing what he called a salivation. He said my life depended upon it. I submitted, and preserved my existence; but how shall I describe what I felt on looking into the glass. Every appearance of old age and deformity. I will leave to your imagination the ideas of horror and grief which tormented my heart. I gave up all pretensions to beauty, as indeed I well might; for my countenance was the picture of every thing disgustful. Think of paleness tinged with a lived yellow, a shrivelled skin, distorted lips, and toothless gums.

I find upon enquiry, that the person whose tooth had been placed in my gums, was labouring under a complication of the filthiest of diseases, and that the tooth inoculated them all on me. I have heard that I am not the only victim to such follies and unnatural

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practices. I understand the transplanting of teeth is dangerous, even when the person from whom it is taken is healthy; but is it likely that a healthy and temperate person would part with his teeth for money? He who can submit to this, must be an abject wretch, and one whose veracity, if he declares himself healthy, can never be safely relied on.

That my life is spared, is a mercy scarcely deserved. I hope to spend it in acquiring a more solid mind and judgment than I possessed, when, from the dictates of vanity, I suffered myself to consent to an unnatural violence, cruel to another, and most injurious to myself. It will contribute something to atone for my folly, if, by communicating the consequences of it, I warn others from its imitation. Adieu.

SIR,

IT pleased Providence to give me a strong constitution, and leading a life of perfect ease and plenty, I began, at the age of eighteen, to grow rather plump, not to say fat and corpulent. Shocking epithets those! and to avoid their being applied to me, I resolved to have recourse to such methods as I had heard were effectually used in reducing the body to a moderate size. I drank vinegar copiously and all acids that I could procure. I lived upon vegetable, scarcely tasting animal food. I laced so tighty, as to squeeze myself in half my natural dimensions; and I sweated myself every day between two feather beds till I was ready to faint. These methods were not unsuccessful. I gradually shrunk to a lady all skin and bone. I felt great complacency in success; but I was little acquainted with the consequences which were shortly to ensue. The state of debility to which I had reduced myself, soon brought on what the physicians called an atrophy. And a most shocking figure I made. I looked in the

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glass with many a wishful sigh after my departed plumpness. I was obliged to call in a physician, who, discovering the cause of my disorder, recommended what is jocosely termed kitchen physic. He gradually led me from milk and eggs to roast beef, plum-pludding, port, and ale. He says, I was at death's door, and indeed I believe it; for my face in my looking-glass, looked just like a death's head sculptured on a tomb-stone. I now laugh and grow fat; and, thank Heaven, am in a fair way of recovering some share of that health which I foolishly destroyed. I hope my example will warn others from falling into similar dangers who may not have strength of constitution sufficient to escape them. It is a secret that must go no farther; but I am to be married next week to a gentleman of large fortune, and every other qualification requisite to make the state happy. If I had continued so thin and ghastly as I once was, I believe he would as soon have thought of marrying one of the skeletons in Surgeons' Hall. Adieu.

Another correspondent informs me that, having pimples in her face, she clandestinely purchased a quack medicine, which she took without advice and without judgment, till at last she brought on a disorder which had nearly proved fatal.

I have heard many complain of having caught colds, fevers, and a long train of dreadful diseases, by dressing in the fashion on first coming out after a long confinement in their bed-chamber.

Many also complain of nervous weaknesses, occasioned by an abstinence, such as hermits and anachorites hardly ever practised, an abstinence from such kinds and quantities of food as are really necessary to the support of nature, an abstinence proceeding from a desire to preserve shape, and to perpetuate youth and beauty,

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but which causes extreme debility and premature old age.

I wish young ladies to be duly sensible of the value of health as well as of beauty. Beauty indeed is scarcely compatible with ill-health; but if it were, it really would be a bad exchange to give up health for beauty. Under the languor of disease, and the torment of pain, many will one day lament that desire of improving their persons which led them in their youth to violate nature, and to weaken the foundation of the whole fabric, while they were endeavouring to decorate the front.

EVENING LIX.

ON THE ILL-USAGE TO WHICH THE INSTRUCTORS OF YOUTH ARE SOMETIMES EXPOSED.

On croit sottement qu'il est plus honorable de conduire en qualite de capitaine, une troup d'ouvriers ou de paysans qu'on nomme soldats, que de commander a de jeunes seigneurs, et de leur former le cœur et l'esprit. CARACCIOLI.

As nothing contributes more to the encouragement and increase of excellence in a profession than the honour bestowed upon it, and the esteem in which it is held by the world; it is an useful and laudable effort which some benevolent writers have made, to raise employments of great importance to society, from the contempt into which they have unfortunately fallen.

Every one is ready to allow the importance of education, yet few entertain a due respect for the profession which is to administer it. The world is governed by names; and with the word Pedagogue has been ludicrously associated the idea of a pedant, a mere plodder, a petty tyrant, a gerund-grinder, and a bum-brusher.

But as the profession is not only in the very first degree useful to society, but attended with peculiar hardships and difficulties, it deserves the recompence and alleviation of public esteem.

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The schoolmaster's employment has been compared to the punishment inflicted on the Danaides and on Sysiphus. His labour knows no end; for, supposing one set of scholars at one time to be attentive and to improve, yet they are succeeded soon after by new scholars, and the whole work is to be recommenced.

He languishes over the repetition of rules and precepts, which have nothing amusing to his fancy, or improving to his understanding. He goes his round like the mill-horse, and his ears ring with cases, declensions, genders, conjugations, *Propria quæ maribus; As in præsenti; hic, hæc, hoc;* and *di, do, dum.*

He is conversant with those who continue in his company unwillingly, and are impatient to be gone; with the petulant, the peevish, the idle, the inattentive, the ungrateful, and the refractory*.

He inhales dust and impure air, and his ears are seldom relieved from noise. His patience and temper are continually put to trial: he bears about him an instrument of torture, and sometimes is obliged to inflict punishment with the reluctant severity of an executioner.

If he spare the rod, he must be often busied in reprimanding, admonishing, remonstrating, and advising those who hate him for his pains; and, if they can have no other revenge, delight in giving uneasiness, by teasing the temper of their best friend, their foster-father. Few occupations exercise the temper, or tend more to spoil it, than that of a conscientious schoolmaster.

He is liable to hourly insult and affronting behaviour from the senior boys, who resent with rancorous virulence the exercise of that discipline on themselves,

* "Quam ingratus labor, totos dies versari inter pueros, inter invitos plerumque, et substrictis veluti auriculis, horam, quæ se carcere emittat, expectantes; inter petulantes, morosos, pigros, reluctantes disciplinæ!" GESNER.

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which they at the same time have sense enough to know is no more than the master's duty compels him to enforce.

He is exposed to continual misrepresentation. The tongue of every boy in his school, however silly or malicious, has a tale to tell concerning his supposed mistakes, his mismanagement, his severity, his partiality, his parsimony. Himself and his family are painted to the father and mother, and to all company, in the blackest colours which malice can invent, and inexperience conceive.

The master is blamed for the faults of nature. A boy is stupid or idle, and learns nothing. He is removed in wrath; the master loses his scholar and the emoluments attending him; but that is not sufficient, he loses something of his peace and his character: for the boy is removed by those who must allege some fault to justify the removal. They cannot bear that an imputation should fall on the boy; and therefore the whole load of censure, aggravated with a thousand falsehoods, is laid on the master.

If he ventures to vindicate himself, he is under the necessity of throwing blame on the boy, which his generosity will often not permit; or if a regard to himself and justice compels him to speak, the offence already given is aggravated beyond all bounds, and both the boy and his friends become implacable enemies and bitter slanderers for life.

These are only a few among the many evils which attend a profession highly useful, and even necessary to the existence of society. It will be urged that in some cases there are the alleviations of hire; and it must be confessed that the world is not so bad as not to furnish many boys of a docile and amiable disposition, and many parents who are grateful and candid. But still there are few employments attended with more

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irksome labour, more liable to ill usage, and less well rewarded by those whom it most essentially serves than that of the schoolmaster.

In some cases it is said to be lucrative; but it should be remembered, that the lucre, when it is considerable, usually arises from the boarding and lodging of pupils in the master's house, and not from the business of instruction and the labour of a school. And where the pupils are lodged and boarded in the superintendent's house, his trouble is ten-fold greater, and the ill-usage to which he is exposed not to be described by language.

The caprice and ill-humour of many boys is such as never can be satisfied. As on the one hand, they know little of the true nature of things, so, on the other, they are prone to judge of all they see with precipitancy. As they have not yet felt the ill-usage of the world, so they want that sort of sympathy for others which experience only can teach. They censure all who are concerned with them, and happen to displease them, without judgment and without mercy. They delight in doing mischief and injuries for diver sion; and, consequently, the superintendent of a number of boys in his own house, has an office something like that of a keeper of a mad-house, a gaol, or a collection of wild beasts, but much more untnankful.

Yet ingenious and learned men sometimes submit to this task voluntarily. They certainly do, and upon the principle of choosing the least of two evils; for it is better than to starve, and to involve a family in all the evils of indigence.

> Want is the scorn of every wealthy fool,
> And wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule.
>
> DRYDEN'S JUV.

Hard necessity forces them to submit to the yoke, and when their shoulders have become galled till they are callous, they bear it with a patient insensibility.

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Yet if we take our ideas of the business of the instructor from a poet, what can be more pleasurable?

> Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast;
> O speak the joy!—— THOMSON.

If there were no perverseness, obstinacy, ingratitude, and stupidity, the task, to a benevolent heart, might be delightful. There is something truly agreeable in assisting the efforts of a youthful mind which is at once ingenious and ingenuous. And certainly many virtues may be advantageously exercised in bearing with ill-usage, and doing good to those who hate and despise you.

It is a fine opportunity of serving human nature and one's country, and I admire the philanthropy of those who, from so pure a motive, are influenced to undergo labours so severe, contumelies so insulting, slanders so unjust, ingratitude so base. I fear the number is small

> ——— vix sunt totidem quot
> Thebarum portæ vel divitis ostia Nili. JUV.

The greater part submit to the labour with the common stimulus of human exertion, the hope of gain; and when it is considered that parents purchase not only ease and exemption from the toil of instruction and the trouble of their children's ill humour, not only accomplishments useful and ornamental, but also food, accommodations, and habitation for their offspring, the gain of their masters should not be considered as earned too easily. If the masters acquit themselves well in an undertaking so arduous, they are justly entitled not only to profit but to honour.

If I should be asked, to what purpose are these observations on the ill-treatment of schoolmasters; I

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should answer, that they are intended to vindicate from contempt an order of men at once useful and oppressed; to induce parents to become more candid and considerate in their behaviour to them, and to persuade masters themselves, actuated by a due sense of their own value in society, to scorn that meanness, submission, and obsequiousness which invites, and almost justifies contempt.

It unfortunately happens that many masters, in a dependent state, exhibit a servility of manners which, while it flatters the weak parent, disgraces the didactic profession. Purse-proud parents are too apt to consider all whom they pay, as servants; and to require an obsequiousness in the instructors of their children incompatible with the spirit of a liberal man worthy to superintend a liberal education. They demand a slavish disposition in him whom they wish to teach their children liberality both by precept and example. Men of sense and liberal minds cannot submit patiently. Others occupy their place, and succeed by adulation and by the mean arts of pleasing; and thus is the profession degraded, and education becomes, instead of a fine philosophical preparation for the conduct of life, a mere mechanical skill in writing, reading, spouting, casting accounts, dancing, fencing, and fiddling. And thus it must be, while masters attend more to pleasing the parent's vanity, submitting to his pride, and complying with his folly, than to serving the pupil in the rugged path of an honest discipline. The Doctor Rocks always had more patients than the Akensides, the Addingtons, the Heberdens, and the Pitcairnes. In no profession are there more arrant Quacks than in the Didactic.

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EVENING LX.

ON SOME EFFECTS OF LONG SEPARATION IN THE MARRIED STATE.

I PRESENT my reader with the following letters, which describe a situation in private life.

My dear Husband,

I write not to upbraid you. I entertain a sincere affection for you, and no unkind usage shall ever remove it. I write only to let you know the state of those whom you have unfortunately abandoned, your children and your wife.

Fame has informed me, with too much authenticity, that you have found another object of your love, and that I shall see your face no more, I who had expected your return from the East Indies with painful anxiety, who had counted the slow hours which parted you from me,—think how I was shocked at hearing you would visit England no more, and that you had settled with a mistress in the South of France. It was for your sake, as well as my own, that I lamented. You went against my earnest entreaties; but it was with a desire, which I thought sincere, to provide a genteel maintenance for our four little ones, whom you said you could not bear to see brought up to the evils of poverty. I might now lament the disappointment in not sharing the expected riches which I hear you have amassed. But I scorn it. What are riches compared to the delight of sincere affection! I deplore the loss of your love; I deplore the frailty which has involved you in error, and will, I am sure, as such mistaken conduct must, terminate in misery.

But I mean not to remonstrate. It is, alas! too late. I only write to you to acquaint you with the health and some other circumstances of myself and those little ones whom you once loved.

The large house in which you left us in Harley-

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street could not be supported without an expence which the little sum you left behind could not long supply. I have relinquished it, and retired to a neat little cottage in a village fifty miles from London. We can make no pretensions to elegance; but we live in great neatness, and, by strict economy, supply our moderate wants with as much comfort as our desolate situation will allow. Your presence, my love, would make the little cottage a palace.

Poor Emily, who is grown a fine girl, has been working a pair of ruffles for you, and often, as she plies her needle, repeats with a sigh, When will my dear papa return? The others are constantly asking me the same question; and little Henry, as soon as he began to talk, learned to lisp, in the first syllables he ever uttered, When will papa come home?

Sweet fellow! He is now sitting on his stool by my side, and as he sees me drop a tear, asks me why I cry, for papa will come home soon. He and his two brothers are frequently riding on your walking-cane, and take particular delight in it, because it is papa's.

I do assure you I never open my lips to them on the cause of your absence. But I cannot prevail with myself to bid them cease to ask when you will return, though the question frequently extorts a tear (which I hide in a smile), and wrings my soul, while I suffer in silence.

I have taught them to mention you with the greatest ardour of affection in their morning and evening prayers; and they always add of themselves a petition for your speedy return.

I spend my time in giving them the little instruction I am able. I cannot afford to place them in any eminent school, and do not chuse that they should acquire meanness and vulgarity at a low one. I hope you will approve my teaching Emily and the two elder boys

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the French language. They have already made a tolerable proficiency in it. As to English, they read alternately three hours every morning the most celebrated poets and prose writers, and they can write, though not an elegant, yet a very plain and legible hand.

Do not, my dear, imagine that the employment is irksome. It affords me a sweet consolation in your absence. Indeed, if it were not for the little ones, I am afraid I should not support it.

I think it will be a satisfaction to you to hear that, by retrenching our wants and expences, we are enabled to pay for every thing we buy; and though poor, are not unhappy from the want of any necessary.

Pardon my interrupting you. I mean to give you satisfaction. Though I am deeply injured by your error, I am not resentful. I wish you all the happiness you are capable of, and am your once loved, and still affectionate,

EMILIA.

After an interval of three years, the following answer was returned:

Excellent Emilia,

By the time you receive this, the hand which wrote it will be laid in the grave. I have ordered it not to be transmitted to you till I am departed; and I am now on my death-bed. My surgeon has told me, in delicate terms, that I cannot recover.

Avarice led me to separate from you; a separation of a year or two caused me, weak as I was, to forget you, and to form a connection, from which I have derived nothing but torment. I deserved it by my folly and my wickedness. You were the best of women, and I have wronged you beyond the power of reparation.

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I will not give you pain by a particular enumeration of my various miseries. I have been infatuated by one who loved me not, but loved the treasure I rapidly amassed in the East, and left no effort untried to captivate my affections. She contrived to come home in the same ship, where our acquaintance increased to an intimacy, which has laid the foundation of all my distress. But, could you believe it? After having spent in dissipation and in gaming almost the whole of my fortune, she left me, not without involving me in a fatal duel, and accompanied the man who gave me my death's wound. The following letter I enclose, that you may have the satisfaction to see how different a woman she was from yourself:

Despicable wretch,

Do you think I will live in beggary with you! Refuse to buy me the diamond necklace! Captain ——— is a generous man. He has long expressed a regard for me. He has bought the necklace which you, mean fellow, refused. Make no more pretensions to me; and if you dare be angry with the Captain for any liberties he may take, be assured you will meet with your match: and I hope to hear that he makes you repent your insolence when you aspired to the affections of one who is deserving of a man of spirit, and ——

Your's no more.

Till I received this I never thought of your letter. Indeed, as I knew your hand, I never opened it; for it reached me when I was intoxicated with newly-acquired opulence, and a variety of vicious gratifications.

It has indeed afforded me satisfaction, as you kindly intended it, to find that my poor children have such a mother to compensate the injuries of a deluded father.

The wound inflicted by my antagonist, who is also a married man, is in a vital part; and there is not, as

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I have been told, the least hope of recovery. I can scarcely wish it, unless it were to repent of my transgressions; for I should be ashamed to see my injured Emilia, and the presence of the little ones would break my heart. I have had time to make a will; and the sum which I have left, though little in comparison with what I acquired abroad, will, I trust, under your care, supply a decent competency.

Forgive me, my dear wife, forgive me, my dear children, and remember that the father who cruelly deserted you, lived a wretch in consequence of his unkindness, and died prematurely. It was the last satisfaction he had, that he lived to see his error, and to ask God and his family forgiveness. Farewell; and may you and your dear children avoid the misery by avoiding the wickedness of your husband,

———.

The silent grief of the amiable Emilia can easily be conceived. But her own heart and her children consoled her. She had brought up her children virtuously, and furnished them with useful knowledge to the best of her power: and they repaid her by gratitude and good conduct. The addition to their very little fortune was opulence to those who had not expected it.

When time had mitigated her grief, I have often heard her in conversation lament the situations which cause married persons to separate at a great distance, and for a long time, which, in some minds, are apt to erase the traces of affection; and she has spoken with warmth against that avarice which drives people who have a competency, and might reasonably be contented at home, to foreign climes in pursuit of enormous wealth, which Providence, as a punishment for avarice, frequently renders the occasion of misery.

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EVENING LXI.

ON CONFOUNDING RELIGION WITH SUPERSTITION.

Horum enim sententiæ omnium non modo superstitionem tollunt, in qua inest Timor *inanis* Deorum; sed etiam Religionem, quæ Deorum pio cultu continetur.

Cic. de Nat. Deo. Lib. 1. 42.

Such is the imperfection of language, that words cannot be found to discriminate all the variety of ideas of the human mind with that degree of precision which is necessary to avoid error. A great many mistakes in morals arise from the abuse of words, which are too often either voluntarily or malevolently misunderstood and misapplied. The Christian religion has always suffered by this perversion. It suffers at this time, since it is denominated by those who impiously endeavour to injure its cause, a mode of superstition. Though man boasts much of his reason, it is really astonishing to consider how few exercise it with effect. Give any thing a bad name, and the majority of mankind will abominate it without examination, merely in consequence of the first impression which they hastily received from a misapplied appellation.

The freethinkers of this age, who dignify themselves with the name of liberal philosophers, hesitate not to stigmatize all religion with the name of superstition. They who wish to be esteemed men of liberal minds, and who abhor the ridicule and censure which attends the bigot, are but too ready to join with the pretended philosophers in exploding religion. To avoid the epithet of superstitious, which conveys to them the idea of weakness, they are rash and precipitate enough to reject all the comfortable offers which religion reaches out to her sincere votaries. The very name frightens them; and if they resolve not to fear God, it is very certain that they are sadly afraid of man. They dare the vengeance of Omnipotence; but they cannot

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stand against the ridicule of a pert witling and the sarcasm of a minute philosopher.

He must know little of the history of mankind who shall deny that superstition has prevailed in all ages and all nations, and caused much cruelty and misery. Man has a natural tendency to superstition. Feeling himself weak and miserable, he is ready to fly to any thing which his fancy suggests to him as a refuge in distress. A stock or a stone become the object of his adoration. He is ready to inflict on himself the most excruciating torments, or to suffer them from others, if he is once persuaded that he can thus appease an angry Deity. Natural affection dies at the command of superstition. A child is sacrificed with alacrity, if the devotee is taught, that with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Every thing yields to the devout phrenzy. That every philanthropist should therefore endeavour to prevent its diffusion among mankind, is to be expected and applauded. But let him not, through carelessness or violence, root up a salutary plant in his endeavour to eradicate a weed. Religion is the medicine of human life, as superstition is its bane.

In this enlightened age there is little danger of gross superstition. The darkness of ignorance was necessary to give to the bugbears of imagination the appearance of reality. Opinions are examined in this country with that freedom which our happy constitution allows, and that perspicacity which a multitude of well-informed understandings must reasonably be supposed to possess. The national religion is therefore professed in all its native purity, and they who presume to call it superstition, only prove their own wickedness and vanity.

Such vanity must be wicked, though at the same time, it owes much of its origin to folly. Weak men often seek nothing farther than the applause of their

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company. They appear wonderfully wise in their own eyes, if they can astonish their neighbours by the singularity or the boldness of their opinions. Such men are to be known, whenever a religious idea is introduced, by a significant sneer of contempt, or an uplifting of the eye-brows with an air of conscious superiority. If the language of grimace is not sufficiently understood, they think it necessary to suggest a hint, "that they look upon all such superstitious stuff as unworthy men of sense, (by which they mean to characterize themselves,) and fit only to scare children and old women. For their own parts, they must congratulate themselves that they are emancipated from the horrid slavery of prejudice."

Nevertheless it would appear, on a fair examination, that these arrogant talkers are only half learned, and that pride fills up the mighty void of sense; yet such is the confidence with which they speak, that the young and the weak are often seduced by them, and become their disciples. Thus their sect is increased in numbers, and their arrogance increases in a much greater proportion.

They teach their disciples that religion owes its rise to subtle politicians, and its support to the arts of priestcraft. It is at once a melancholy and an undeniable truth, that religion has been hypocritically abused by statesmen and ecclesiastics to serve the purposes of avarice and ambition. But will cavillers never desist from arguing against the use of a thing from its abuse, a fallacy unworthy a man of common understanding or common honesty? I reprobate those politicians and those priests who have attempted to avail themselves of religion as an artifice to promote their secular designs. They are more detestable than the open and declared unbeliever. If he is honest, he is an object of compassion rather than contempt: but those

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artful politicians, who think to drive men to slavery, or obedience, as they call it, by frightening them with the phantoms of religion which they do not themselves believe, deserve the vengeance of society. It will be said, that they intend to preserve good order by promoting superstition. I cannot call that good order which is preserved only by the deceit and hypocrisy of the rulers. Good order requires that men capable of so mean deceit should not be the governing a part of society. Their very pre-eminence disturbs good order. The only good order which they really wish to promote is, that tame acquiescence among the lower ranks, which allows themselves to lord it over a subject world.

It is very true that religion contributes to secure a peaceable acquiescence in good government. This is one among its many beneficent effects; but it is not true that religion is only the invention of politicians, and a mere state engine to effect tranquillity. It originates in the human mind from the spontaneous feelings of nature. In the most unenlightened countries, where no pretensions were ever made to revelation, traces of it are to be found. Nothing but ignorance united with depravity can deny the foundations of natural religion. Every good mind admitting natural religion by the light of natural understanding, will rejoice to find so many proofs of the Christian revelation.

To fear God is the best method of acquiring that true courage which fears nothing else. The fear of God arises not from a timorous and weak mind, as the infidel pretenders to philosophy represent it. I appeal to facts in the history of mankind. Have not the bravest and best men in all ages and nations displayed a reverential awe of God? If only the weak had patronized religion, it would long ago have been exploded. The examples and arguments of the best and wisest of man-

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kind have operated, under the direction of Providence, in continuing in the world, that source of all true comfort, a due sense of religion. The vain and the wicked have endeavoured to destroy it, and they have always succeeded with a few; but they have not been able to prevail universally; neither will they; for it is founded on the rock of truth, and the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I am sorry to observe the philosophy of Epicurus gaining ground in our country. It might be called the philosophy of Satan. It is destructive of every thing virtuous and good, and equally portends the ruin of empires and of human nature. It flatters human depravity so much, that nothing can impede its progress but the counteracting prevalence of Christian principles and practices.

I therefore seriously exhort all who are Christians indeed, to dare to profess what they believe, and to discountenance error by the native fortitude of truth. The misfortune is, that the modest Christian is too often restrained by his love of peace, and by his humility, from standing up in the defence of the Gospel; while the patrons of error, incited by vanity, and a malignant desire of rendering others as wicked and miserable as themselves, are indefatigable in the diffusion of their opinions. It becomes the duty of the sincere Christian to exert himself, when unbelievers multiply, and when the scorner declares the Christian religion, like all other religions, to be only "a mode of superstition."

On the Machiavellian principle of using religion as an engine of state, let me ask the pretended philosophers, how the most important transactions of civil life, and how the business of courts of judicature can proceed, when the doctrine shall be successfully diffused, that Christianity is but an artful delusion to cathral

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the vulgar? Will an oath be then of any force or obligation? These philosophers are more injurious to the interests of society than many malefactors who are by the laws of their country capitally convicted. They destroy the very root of all civil and mortal virtue. They are teachers of vice, not of timid and reluctant vice, but of vice which dares the broadest daylight, and boldly defends itself on avowed principle.

I will conclude with adding one suggestion, which, though it may not find universal approbation, will, I think, deserve it. I am persuaded that a good man ought to be cautious of expressing himself with scorn and contempt even on the subject of those many false religions which prevail in the world, and which may justly deserve the name of superstition; for it appears to me, that God Almighty, as a benevolent being, must always be pleased with intentional service and obedience, though the mode of performing it should be erroneous. At least, I believe it will admit no doubt, that God will be better pleased with the zeal of the most superstitious, than with the impiety and presumption of the unbelieving philosopher, who proudly imagines his own reason to be the standard of all truth and propriety.

These unhappy dupes of pride will, I dare say, at some future day, find their error refuted, if not by argument, yet by the slow punishments of an avenging God. For great and terrible is the Lord God omnipotent. Who may abide his wrath? "If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Blessed indeed are they who throughout life have served their God with devotion and humility. God shall make all their bed in their sickness. Life to them shall be pleasant, as a journey through a delightful country, warmed and enlightened by the sun; and

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death shall be to them disarmed of his terrors; so that both in life and at death, they shall experience the truth of that declaration, which teaches us, that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

EVENING LXII.

ON SUFFERING THE JUDGMENT TO BE MISLED BY WIT ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

To be remarkable for that lively and creative power of the mind which invents such ideas as are both pleasing and surprising, by their truth and novelty, is a distinction greatly to be valued. It is to possess a power of diffusing a charm on every subject, and of striking conviction in the mind with an instantaneous impulse. There is no doubt but that the Giver of every good gift intended that it should be productive of beneficial effects. It is certainly conducive to cheerfulness, and enlivens the dull identity of common life. It ridicules folly; and, by ridiculing, frequently corrects it. It often decides with momentary intuition on subjects of which plodding industry has laboured only to augment the obscurity. None, I believe will indulge a general invective against wit, but those who are destitute of it.

Wit has sometimes been used as an auxiliary to reason in the defence of religion. Dr. South possessed a share of abilities which were sufficient to brandish any weapon which he chose to employ. Wit in his hand was sharp and irresistible, and made its way like the scymitar or the battle-axe. He was one of the ablest champions of the church. He is not only a wit but a solid reasoner. His learning is equal to his natural endowments. Wit enlivens the mass of his erudition, as the leaven leaveneth a farinaceous substance. Dr. South exerted his wit to so good purposes, and with so much effect, that he is most deserv-

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odly placed in a high rank among the many excellent preachers who have adorned this country. Yet a sincere admirer of him cannot but wish that he had not deformed his writings with some expressions which, though not destitute of humour, must be condemned as vulgar and indecorous.

Dr. Horne, the Bishop of Norwich, who discovered a genuine spirit of piety in his writings, and displayed the beauty of holiness in all its charms, has attacked the philosophy of Hume with the arms of ridicule. Indeed many parts of Hume's philosophy appear to carry with them their own refutation by inherent absurdity; but they fall into the hands of those whose want of learning and of principles induces them to admit the arguments of sophistry in defence of libertinism. Dr. Horne justly supposed that the admirers of Hume were more likely to be disabused of their error by the fear of derision, than by any force of argumentation. He has indeed derided both Hume and the Humists, as they affect to style themselves, with singular success. I only wish that the part of his book in which they are attacked could be universally introduced to their notice. It would operate as an antidote to the poison of the sceptic, unless indeed its genuine effect should be prevented by the force of established prejudice.

I should not have regretted if the latter part of Dr. Horne's Letters upon Infidelity had been entirely omitted. It owes its origin to an obscure pamphlet, which would never have emerged to notice by its own strength: and the difficulties of many passages in Scripture will never be removed to the satisfaction of cavilling sceptics, by the most ingenious answers.

It must be owned, that great caution is required in the use of wit and humour as auxiliary to the cause of religion. They induce a levity of mind, which is

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too apt to degenerate to a wanton disregard of every thing serious. Religion, like a chaste matron, should appear in a dress which excites sentiments of respect, and forbids familiarity. When she is introduced to mankind in a grotesque or gay attire, she ought to be under the direction of a guide who can teach her to preserve an air of dignity in the midst of her condescension: I mean to suggest that wit and humour should never be used in religious treatises but by writers whose judgment, like that of Dr. Horne, is superior to their comic abilities; and whose comic abilities, like Yorick's, would set the table in a roar.

Wit and humour have indeed been much more frequently employed as the enemies than as the auxiliaries of Christianity. The natural man, as he is styled in the Holy Scriptures, that is, the man who is unregenerated by grace, and he also, who is but little read in theological learning, will find a multitude of particulars in Scripture which, with but a small share of ingenuity, they may perversely turn to ridicule. To be facetious on sacred subjects requires more malignity than wit.

That Voltaire had wit, none can deny but those who are destitute of it. In subjects of polite literature his wit is always delightful, though his judgment is said to be not always sound; but on subjects which concern things sacred, both his wit and his judgment deserve reprobation. Here his wit is always misapplied, as well as often false.

But, allowing, for the sake of argument, that the wit of Voltaire in sacred subjects is pure and excellent, yet every man of sense and seriousness will arm himself with caution before he ventures to give it his attention. A man has so much to gain or to lose by his religion, that he will not rashly incur the danger of losing all belief in it. He recollects that the sparks of wit are

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often like the fire of a nocturnal vapour, which shines only to seduce, or like some stones fabricated by art in imitation of nature, at once brilliant and false.

Reason only, or the powerful impulses of conscience, can influence a man of sense in affairs of religion. Convince me, if you can, he will say, that my religion is ill-founded, and I will relinquish it. But to convince is not in the power of wit alone. Its province is to amuse the fancy, and not to persuade the faculty of reason.

It may be rather difficult to avoid delusion when it appears under so pleasing a form as that of wit; but, as religion is confessedly of infinite consequence to our happiness, let us always prove the solidity of the wit by the touchstone of good sense. An impartial application of that test will, I am convinced, always become favourable in the result to the cause of Christianity. If we are led by curiosity to read the works of celebrated wits who have taken the part of infidelity, let us always discriminate between wit and argument, so as to be amused only by the wit, and remain unshaken in our faith till the fortress of it is battered by the main force of superior and commanding reason. Christianity has stood like a rock of ages amidst the waves of the sea, for many centuries, against every attack whether of wit or of argument, and, under the Divine Providence, there is every reason to believe that it shall stand till time itself shall be absorbed in eternity.

END OF VOL. II.

THOMAS WHITE,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

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